



Keeping it Green with Peter Harradine

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Keeping it Green No1 with Dubai based Golf Course Architect Peter Harradine

Hallo All,

I have never written a column before but I suppose that there is a first time for everything! (and this one is not painful)

People who know me will have heard some of my very short speeches or read some of my articles but this is something new for me.

Fortunately, I was away most of the summer checking on my European projects. I was told that this summer really was a scorcher!

I returned to Dubai from the 16th – 22nd of August just in time to celebrate EID and go for a photoshoot at the “TRACK”.

I enjoyed swinging a club again after the forced abstinence due to my back operation and I thought: hey I'll start to play again! Unfortunately, it is more important for me to walk a site during the design and construction stage of a golf course without risking another back problem by playing golf.

But, I don't really mind as I played this great, frustrating, fantastic and marvelous game for over 50 years. I have therefore, delegated the playing to my son Michael who is a better player than I ever was!

“I have never ever seen so many weeds on any course..”

I'm happy with the way the new Meydan layout is maturing and I'm sure that Robin Evans and Dindy of TROON will soon eradicate those damned weeds that have infested the course!

I have never ever seen so many weeds on any course and Orient Irrigation had quite a task in trying to eliminate the majority of them during the construction stage before TROON took over the maintenance. The weeds were dormant in the existing sand and grass until they received water and fertilizers which made them pop-up and invade the course like a damned “blitzkrieg”.

The Meydan course was not easy to upgrade due to the fact that we were restricted in our changes mainly because we had to stay within the floodlight poles and the underground irrigation pipes.

We managed however to change all the holes except for no. 3. This hole has remained more or less the same although we added a fairway bunker, lowered the fairway in front of the lake and altered the green.

There is a little confusion about who actually designed the previous 9 holes that were outside the race track but I have it from a very reliable source (who wishes to remain anonymous) that it was Mr. Rod Bogg who designed it “on the back of a fag (cigarette) packet”. I didn't know he smoked!

It does not really matter who designed the former course and I just hope that we managed to improve the golfing experience despite the restrictions that limited our design autonomy.

“I just hope that we managed to improve the golfing experience..”

I'm very glad that we finally have a pay and play course in Dubai and I hope that the fees will also reflect this familiar concept.

I hope that you will all enjoy “The Track” as we tried to provide an interesting, challenging but not too difficult course.

Just remember, you do not have to play off the back tees and just play around those lakes!

Ciao Peter