

Regional golf round-up: What drives Michael Harradine



Joy Chakravarty

Michael Harradine has been one of UAE's leading amateur golfers for the past few seasons.

Winner of last week's Omega Emirates Amateur Open, the 30-year-old is leading the Emirates Golf Federation Order of Merit again, having won it the two previous seasons.

We caught up with Harradine and tried to find out more about the unassuming man...

How did you start playing the game?

I used to play a lot of tennis with my friends as a kid. Played a bit of golf too as it is family business (father Peter is a renowned golf course designer) .

Dad always wanted us all to play and I switched when I was 16.

I then stopped playing for almost eight years when I was studying in Switzerland.

Your golfing idol and why?

There isn't sort of one guy.

I would have loved to play with my granddad. He was off to +3 in the days of ancient clubs.

But I like Henrik Stenson for his determination, Miguel Angel Jimenez for his longevity, Tiger Woods for his overall ball-striking and Seve Ballesteros for his recovery game.

The best round of your life?

I have two seven-unders, and one of them was at the Faldo course in club championships. Everything felt easy that day... everything just came together. In fact, I felt like I left some shots

out there.

That was perhaps the only day when I came off the course completely satisfied.

Favourite golf course?

Doha Golf Club has to be right up there, because how much it varies. The par-4s and par-3s are so different.

Other courses I can score on, and I struggle in Doha, but I find it a beautiful course.

Favourite club in the bag?

Used to be the driver, but not any more. It's got to be my six-iron. Overall, it is the steadiest club in my bag right now.

The best golf shot in your life?

I'd say the hole-in-one I had at Al Hamra's 15th. I struck it really well. The pin was behind a little bump on the green and I could not see it go in.

The best win of your life?

Sheikh Rashid Trophy in 2010. It was not long after I started playing again, and perhaps the first important trophy I won.

It was played over three courses.

The one thing you hate most on a golf course?

Slow play.

The best golfing advice you have received?

The worst the going is, the more you have to knuckle down and believe it will come back.

The one golf rule you'd like to change?

Tapping down spike marks, especially on grainy greens.

What's all this talk about turning pro?

I was thinking of turning pro the year before. I am glad I did not, because I had the worst golfing year last year.

It takes a lot of hard work to get on to the bigger Tours.

The good thing is that I can now the Q-Schools as an amateur, and turn pro if I qualify. I will definitely play the Asian Tour Q-School as an amateur.

Fact file

Date of birth:

7th March 1983

UAE connection:

Born in Sharjah's Al Zahra hospital. Moved to Dubai at the age of six. Lived here till 18, before leaving for Switzerland for higher studies. Returned four years ago, armed with a university degree in landscape architecture

Club:

Emirates Golf Club and Jebel Ali

Coach:

Stuart Fee in Jebel Ali

Handicap:

+2.8