

RAK to host European Challenge Tour event

Event part of emirate's commitment to golf tourism, official says



Haitham Mattar, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, and Nick Tarratt, Director, European Tour International, Dubai, at the official contract signing for the RAK Golf Challenge.

Ras Al Khaimah: The inaugural Ras Al Khaimah Golf Challenge will see the European Challenge Tour, sponsored by Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, return to the UAE next year.

The event will be hosted at **Peter Harradine** designed Al Hamra Golf Club from October 26-29, 2016 . It will be the first time the European Challenge Tour visits Ras Al Khaimah. The tournament, with a prize fund of \$350,000 up for grabs, will be sanctioned locally by the Emirates Golf Federation. It will take up a key position in the 2016 schedule as the Challenge Tour's penultimate event, the week before the season-ending climax, the NBO Golf Classic Grand Final.

Nick Tarratt, Director, European Tour International, Dubai, said: "The launch of a Challenge Tour event in Ras Al Khaimah will provide Al Hamra golf course with the opportunity to showcase the club, resort and emirate through our 'play where the pros play' mantra to a worldwide audience via our television and global media platforms."

Haitham Mattar, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority said that hosting the European Challenge Tour was part of the emirate's "commitment to golf tourism".

He added that it "highlights the importance we are placing on the sport in 2016 and beyond."

Mattar said: "The world-class golf course at Al Hamra Golf Club is the ideal location for such a prestigious event, and we look forward to welcoming golf enthusiasts from around the world to the tournament."

A field of a minimum of 85 Challenge Tour players plus a further 20 sponsors' invitations of professionals and amateurs via the participating Federations can include Arab nationals and expatriates with an appropriate handicap. The event will be the Challenge Tour players' final opportunity to secure a place in the season-ending Grand Final at Almouj Golf, The Wave in Muscat, Oman, open only to the top 45 Challenge Tour players on the Road to Oman Rankings.

The Challenge Tour is 'Where Heroes Are Made' — the European Tour's development tour — and where the likes of Henrik Stenson, Justin Rose, Martin Kaymer, Jamie Donaldson, Stephen Gallacher, Ian Poulter, Thomas Bjorn, Bernd Wiesberger and Branden Grace have all graduated from to become stars on the big stage.

The announcement signals a welcome return to the UAE for the Challenge Tour following in the footsteps of the Challenge Tour Grand Final which was held in Dubai in 2013 and 2014.