

New Sharjah Senior Golf Masters to be part of European Seniors Tour

The first Sharjah Senior Golf Masters, presented by Shurooq, will be played in March 2017.



The event will be the northern emirate's first ever international tournament.

Sharjah placed itself on the international golfing map with the announcement that the northern emirate will host its first ever international tournament – the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters presented by Shurooq.

The tournament will be part of European Seniors Tour, and it is the first time that a European Tour event – whether on main Tour, Challenge Tour or Seniors Tour – is being hosted by a nine-hole course, the **Peter Harradine**-designed Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club in this instance.

The announcement was made in the presence of four well-known stars of the Seniors Tour – Des Smyth, Ronan Rafferty, Paul Broadhurst and Malcolm Mackenzie – all of whom played the inaugural Dubai Desert Classic in 1989, which was the first international full-field event in the UAE.

Shurooq, the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority, will be the main sponsors for the tournament offering a total purse of \$450,000. The inaugural event of the three-year contract period will be played March 16 to 18, 2017. It will be supported by Sharjah Sports Council and the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority.

This is the first Seniors Tour event since one in Bahrain in 2006, which was won by Irishman Smyth.

And the eight-time European Tour winner, said: “It’s wonderful to see how much the UAE, and the game of golf has developed since I first started coming here.

“It is fantastic news that Sharjah is going to join the stable of world-class golf events hosted in the UAE and all the players on the European Senior Tour will really enjoy coming to this wonderful destination.

“Of course, we would have loved Rory (McIlroy) to play the event, but he’d a bit underage to play with us! However, we have several established stars of our time, and we try very hard to put up a good show and make sure people enjoy their day.”



The tournament will be supported by Sharjah Sports Council and SCTDA.

Andy Stubbs, Managing Director, European Senior Tour, said the Tour was charting a new course with the Sharjah tournament.

“Obviously, we’re delighted to be in Sharjah and complete the strong presence of European Tour through the Desert Swing and the Challenge Tour events. We do aspire to have a Seniors Tour Desert Swing one day, but this is a great start.

“I am absolutely certain that this is the first time the Seniors Tour is playing on a nine-hole course, and I think it has never been done before with the European Tour of the Challenge Tour. At the Senior Tour, we are more open to new ideas and our Chief Executive, Keith Pelley, has given us the mandate to try out new things, including formats.”

Stubbs added that Senior Tour Order of Merit champion Colin Montgomerie is aware of the event and is hopeful he will just be one of the many stars in action.

“Colin plays in the US, but the schedule is lean in March, so he is interested. But then you have guys like Paul McGinley, John Daly and Jose Maria Olazabal turning 50 this year, so it could be a very exciting field indeed,” said Stubbs.

Marwan Jassim Al Sarkal, Chief Executive Officer, Shurooq, said the tournament will provide the perfect platform to showcase the Emirate’s merits as an investment, tourism, sport and business destination.

Al Sarkal said: “Shurooq’s partnership with the European Senior Tour to present the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters is in line with our strategy and vision to promote Sharjah as one of the most diverse investment cities in the world.

“Our objective through this event is to continue promoting Sharjah’s facilities, services and tourism as a key destination for hosting some of the world’s most luxurious and bespoke sporting events of their kind.”

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al Thani, Deputy Chairman, Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club, said: “Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club is truly delighted to be hosting such a high profile and international sporting event.

“This initiative has been in the pipeline for three or four years now and it is thrilling to finally announce the event.”

The announcement was marked with a curtain-raising Pro-Am event, the Sharjah Senior Invitational Pro-Am presented by Shurooq, which was supported by Emirates, BMW and the Sheraton Sharjah.