

SENIOR TOUR TO RETURN TO THE UAE

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(European Tour)

Shurooq, the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority, has partnered with the European Senior Tour to host the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters presented by Shurooq at the Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club from 2017 to 2019, becoming the fifth current European Tour initiative in the United Arab Emirates.

The inaugural 54-hole event, sanctioned by the Emirates Golf Federation, and supported by Sharjah Sports Council and the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, will take place at the [Peter Harradine](#)-designed course from March 16 to 18, 2017, forming part of the European Senior Tour Order of Merit, with a sizeable prize fund of US\$450,000 on offer.

H.E. 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 truly 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 and for us to play such a big part in putting the Emirate of Sharjah well and truly on the global map."

Al Thani added: "Our club itself also justifies its place on such a stage as we get an opportunity to showcase our unique range of facilities which, beyond a world class fully floodlit golf course and state of the art academy, include; indoor shooting ranges, a paintball park, four gymnasiums, archery, tennis, basketball courts, swimming pools and spas. We are all truly excited and are confident the event will be thoroughly enjoyed by the thousands of people who visit us over the course of the week as well as the millions that watch it on television worldwide."

The three-year agreement, which promises to see some of golf's most enduring talents grace the United Arab Emirates will mark the fourth time the European Senior Tour has visited the Middle East following events in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain.

H.E Marwan Jassim Al Sarkal, Chief Executive Officer, Shurooq, believes that the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters will provide the perfect platform to showcase the Emirate's merits as an investment, tourism, sport and business destination.

He 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 grand event is to continue in 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. The Sharjah Senior Golf Masters serves as a key opportunity for international players, sponsors and international companies involved in the tournament to visit and explore Sharjah's magnificent tourism destinations, culture, heritage and unique architecture."

Al Sarkal added: "Golf is one of the most popular and luxurious sports in the UAE. Many international companies are investing in the golf industry and choosing the UAE as their top choice to host world-renowned golf tournaments. The UAE leads the Middle East in high-end investments in the sports industry and it shows no signs of slowing down. We are confident that the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters will open doors for world-renowned sporting associations and tournament organisers to invest in Sharjah as a key destination to host their respective events."

Today's announcement is marked with a curtain-raising Pro-Am event, the Sharjah Senior Invitational Pro-Am presented by Shurooq and supported by Emirates, BMW and the Sheraton Sharjah.

The Pro-Am features three former Ryder Cup stars in the form of Des Smyth, Ronan Rafferty and Paul Broadhurst. The trio are all regular competitors on the European Senior Tour and each has witnessed the phenomenal boom in golf in the Middle East over the past three decades having competed in the inaugural Dubai Desert Classic back in 1989. Also in the field is Malcolm Mackenzie, who claimed the Open de France in 2002 at the venue where the 2018 Ryder Cup will take place, Le Golf National.

Irishman Smyth, an eight-time European Tour winner who represented Europe in both the 1979 and 1981 Ryder Cup, said: "It's wonderful to see how much the UAE, and the game of golf has developed since I first started coming here. The whole region is thriving and it's become a real hub for international golf. 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."

The European Senior Tour is "Where Legends Live On", and is open to players over the age of 50. It has provided a platform for some of golf's biggest stars to go on enjoying golden moments and delighting fans well into their twilight years since it began life in 1992.

The legendary Gary Player matched his nine Majors on the regular tours with nine Senior Majors, while eight-time European Tour Order of Merit winner Colin Montgomerie is currently replicating that dominance on the European Senior Tour having topped the Order of Merit for the last two seasons, racking up three Major championships in the process.

Andy Stubbs, Managing Director, European Senior Tour, said: "We're delighted to announce the Sharjah Senior Masters presented by Shurooq. It is a tri-party agreement between Shurooq, the underwriting sponsors, Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club, the host venue, and The European Senior Tour, the sanctioning body, and we thank all parties for their hard work and passion in making this project possible."