

March 7th, 2017

## European Senior Tour to make history on nine-hole golf course



The European Senior Tour will make history in the United Arab Emirates this month as the Sharjah Senior Golf Masters presented by Shurooq will become the first European Tour, European Challenge Tour or Senior Tour event to be played on a nine-hole golf course.

Held at Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club from March 16-18, Senior Tour competitors will negotiate the nine-hole **Peter Harradine**-designed course twice on each tournament day, with the par three and five holes being played from varying tees throughout the tournament week, a format which has never been used during a European Tour-sanctioned event.

David MacLaren, Head of the European Senior Tour, said: “With the recent and exciting innovations on the European Tour such as GolfSixes, and on the European Challenge Tour with their Match Play 9 event in May, we are delighted to create our own piece of European Tour history at the inaugural Sharjah Senior Golf Masters.

“Organising an 18-hole professional tournament on a nine-hole golf course has been no easy task and I would like to thank Martin Duff, Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club Director, and our own team led by Simon Higginbottom for their diligence in ensuring that the venue will offer a stern, interesting and unusual test for our members.

“We are delighted to return to the United Arab Emirates for the first time since 2000, and we are looking forward to making further history with our hosts in Sharjah who are holding their first ever professional golf tournament.”

Tournament Director Simon Higginbottom will utilise a number of different tee boxes on the third, fourth, sixth and eighth holes, giving the 57-player field fresh challenges during the three tournament rounds – the yardage of the course can vary between 5,922 yards and 7,462 yards, and has been set at 7,051 for this year’s competition.

“We have determined that we would like to play the course differently each time around,” said Higginbottom. “We can make the experience on each of the holes very different by moving tees.

“For example, the third/12th hole has tees from drastically different angles and lengths. The tees we will use makes for only 20 yards difference in length, but they are 80 yards apart, making the angle of attack quite different.

“Equally the sixth/15th hole is a long par five the first time around, with no real chance of players reaching the green in two. However, when played as the 15th, we move the tee forward, making the hole very reachable. This brings water into play, but the fairway has been reshaped slightly to reward good tee shots, giving players a chance to make birdie or eagle – which could be pivotal during the final round.

“The par fours will remain the same as they are each very challenging – these holes will be key to low scores during the tournament.

“We will be working hard to ensure that no players use the wrong tee box during the event, so all tees are numbered. We will ensure that they are fully prepared and understand how the course will play.”

The Sharjah Senior Golf Masters is one of potentially four new events on the Senior Tour Schedule, joining the recently announced European Tour Properties Senior Classic, English Senior Open and the to-be-confirmed Dutch Senior Open for 2017.