

# Top Class Golf

## Returns To The UAE With Ras Al Khaimah 2017 Golf Challenge

Excitement is building as top class golf returns to the UAE this month with the second edition of the Ras Al Khaimah 2017 Golf Challenge.

Taking place at the stunning Al Hamra Golf Club from October 25-28, the event will see the pros locking horns in the penultimate event on the Challenge Tour calendar as they aim to end the season in the top 15 on the Road to Oman Rankings and gain promotion to the European Tour.

Something former challenge Tour player Jordan Smith knows a thing or two about. After winning the inaugural event last year, Smith went on to secure his first European Tour Card for the 2017 season and won his first Tour event at the Porsche European Open in July. The English ace has already sealed his place in the season-ending DP World Tour Championship, open only to the top 60 players in the Race to Dubai rankings (he's currently 17th), after a terrific rookie campaign which has also seen him finish tied ninth in his first Major, the US PGA Championship.

"I might sound a bit biased as I won the Ras Al Khaimah 2016 Golf Challenge but I remember turning up and everything was just perfect," said Smith, who has in RAK last month to promote the upcoming Challenge Tour tournament and played a round at Al Hamra GC with Worldwide Golf editor Alex Gallemore. "We stayed right next to the course on the beach and I really enjoyed my stay.

"I think the event has the potential to become the Grand Final of the Challenge Tour season as it is very similar to the setup at the NBO Golf Classic Grand Final in Oman. Al Hamra Golf Club has some great facilities and the course is definitely good enough.

"I'd had a very strong Challenge Tour season last year but winning Ras Al Khaimah was the icing on the cake.

"Performing so consistently with so much on the line was a huge confidence boost and

I've been fortunate enough to carry that form into my rookie season on the European Tour. Everything is going well but there's not a day that goes by where I don't think how important my Ras Al Khaimah win was in getting me to where I am today. I'm only really at the start of my golf career - a bit like Ras Al Khaimah - and it's going to be a long journey but that particular junction was a crucial point in my progression."

With the world's up-and-coming golf stars due to tee-off in the second Ras Al Khaimah Golf Challenge in a few weeks time, Smith believes Al Hamra Golf Course designed by Peter Harradine will prove a stern test for this year's crop of emerging European Challenge Tour superstars.

"The Al Hamra course is in very good condition; you would never guess we're at the tail-end of a scorching summer season in Ras Al Khaimah. It will be in perfect shape

