

TOURNAMENT OF THE MONTH

SHARJAH WANDERERS MEN'S OPEN

Harradine's class endures unique test

It may not resemble the kind of perfectly manicured golf that we associate with the UAE, but a weekend of tournament play on the quirkiest course in the emirates is nonetheless an integral part of the fabric of golf in this region. And it's not for the faint-hearted. The art of sand golf is relatively straightforward in principle. You must keep the ball within the stakes (which demarcate the boundaries of the official 'playing surfaces' on each hole) at all costs, and when you stray into the desert, you must get your ball back into play faster than Peter Alliss can say: "Come on son, take your medicine."

If only it were that easy. The problem is that as amateur golfers, we are continually seduced by the high risk and usually non-sensical 'hero' shot from trouble. Attempting these plays results in numbers that international tail-end batsmen would cherish, and as a consequence, rounds on the Wanderers course can spiral out of control in a matter of moments. While we battled the unforgiving desert, with its thorny scrubs, multitude of bad lies and menacing camel spiders, a golf tournament was actually taking place. It was won, in some style, by the best amateur golfer in the UAE, Michael Harradine, who posted back-to-back 72s to beat Steve Chambers by seven strokes. And that is some golf.

Clockwise from top right: Michael Harradine chips up towards the par 4 16th 'brown'. The desert landscape serves as a backdrop to the unique Wanderers course. Steve Munro finished in fourth place. Colourful Alex Charawani chips up to the 17th. Harradine proved an expert at keeping the ball in play. Shots from the 'rough' were typically fraught with danger. Alex went on to finish 3rd.

