

# Injured Harradine to defend his title

The two-day Sport360° Sharjah Men's Open gets under way on Friday

By Joy Chakravarty

He has a broken finger in his right hand, but that's not going to stop Michael Harradine from defending his Sport360° Sharjah Men's Open title.

Harradine, winner over the last two years at the Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club on a course designed by his father, Peter, hurt his middle finger a few weeks ago, and although still feeling the pain, he is hoping to put up a spirited defence when the event begins tomorrow.

The Emirates Golf Federation Order of Merit leader said: "I broke it a few weeks back, but didn't realise it then. I waited for it to heal for a couple of weeks before going to the doctor. It was then that we found out that I had broken it.

"It's much better now although it still hurts when I hit a bad shot. But I wanted to play the tournament and defend my title. So, I will have to make sure I hit only good shots this week."

Harradine, the runaway Order of



Hurting but ready to challenge: Michael Harradine.

Merit winner last season and No2 the year before, has missed two of the five events played in 2012-2013 season so far. But he still leads the table with 90 points over the second-placed Ricky Dominguez of Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club (73.5 points).

Dominguez will be missing his

home tournament as he is in South Africa for Christmas.

"I'd rather be in a slightly different situation coming into the tournament," said Harradine. "I have practised a bit, but my confidence is not at its highest right now.

"The Sharjah course is a tough course to make birdies on, so I will

concentrate on hitting the greens and aim for pars."

A look at the four-year history of the tournament validates Harradine's comment. The lowest winning score is a three-under par, recorded by European Tour professional Andrew Marshall in the inaugural year.

"Traditionally, it's been a tough course as the scoring suggests," said Martin Duff, Director of Golf, SGSC. "It's in outstanding condition, with greens running to speed of 10 on the stimp and I am sure the players are going to enjoy it.

"The closing stretch starting from the fifth to the ninth (and hence 14th to 18th on this nine-hole course) have always challenged the players. You cannot be over aggressive and think of shooting low numbers because this course can jump and bite you any time.

"We are really delighted with the strength of the field this year. The handicap cut is at 8.8."

The tournament is being sponsored by Sport360°.