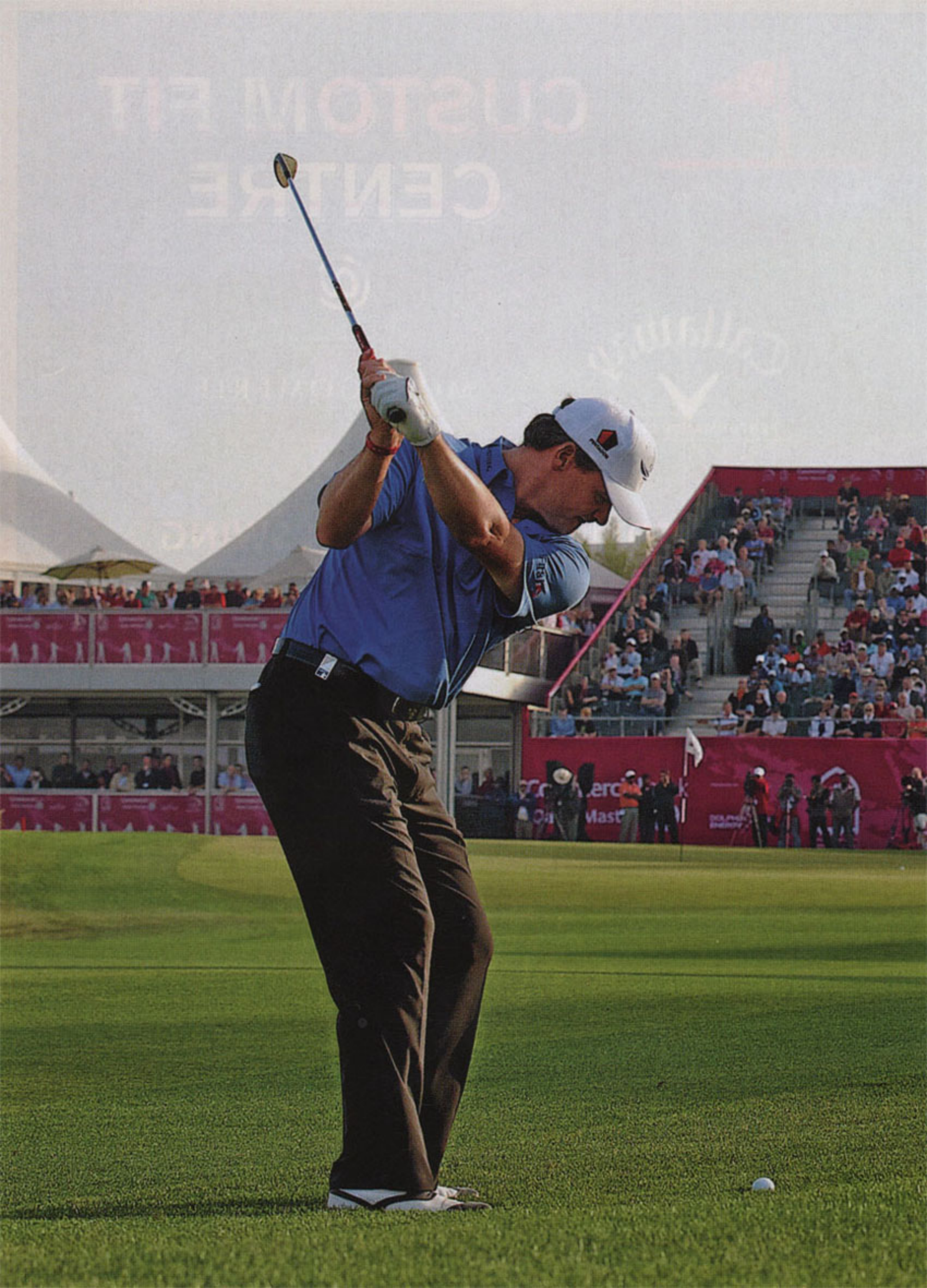


DESERT SWING GUIDE





QATAR CALLING

The Commercial Bank Qatar Masters forms the delicious filling of the Desert Swing Sandwich

Ryder Cup star Paul Lawrie has confirmed he will attempt to win a record third Commercial Bank Qatar Masters title this month to add to his victories in 1999 and February 2012.

The 43-year-old is the event's second two-time champion, following Australian Adam Scott, who won in 2002 and 2008.

The 16th Commercial Bank Qatar Masters will, for the first time, be played from Wednesday to Saturday, January 23-26, at Doha Golf Club, positioning the US\$2.5 million event at the heart of The European Tour's three-week Middle East swing.

Now enjoying a 'second wind' in his career, Lawrie won two European Tour titles in 2012, and finished a highly-creditable tenth in The Race To Dubai with more than EU1.9 million in winnings. He also reached a career-high World Ranking and beat Brandt Snedeker in the Singles to help Europe retain The Ryder Cup at Medinah.

Although hot off what he describes as the most consistent season of his career, the 1999 Open Champion has tempered expectations of another victory in Doha.

"It's a tournament I enjoy, where I've not only won twice but had a lot of good finishes," said Lawrie. "It'll be my third event of 2013 so I should be game sharp, more than I would be if it was my first event.

"I know the course well, as we've played there many times. I look forward to going back, but there are very few people who go to tournaments



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and successfully defend. Obviously you go there with good feelings, but sometimes that holds you back a wee bit, makes it harder to win again.”

Although strong winds reduced last year’s Qatar Masters to 54 holes, Lawrie was in his element on the 7,374-yard Championship Course. Adept at keeping the ball low and nicknamed ‘Chippy’ for his short-game prowess, the Scot chipped in twice during a closing 65 which gave him a 15 under par total of 201 for a four-stroke win.

Lawrie’s game is well suited to the winter conditions in Qatar as they combine with Peter Harradine’s design at Doha Golf Club to resemble the golf he is used to playing in his native Scotland.

“I just like playing in Doha,” he said. “It’s linksy, it’s windy, you’ve got to knock the ball down, you’ve got to think a wee bit more. It’s not just

stand up and give it a batter.

“I enjoy it that way. You’ve got to play the ball, shape the ball a wee bit, which is unusual these days. You don’t have to do that very often, but Qatar’s got that. It’s always breezy, but even though it’s windy, the scoring is always good because there are chances and the greens are firm, which we like. But you’ve got to keep the ball down.

“Doha was a huge week for me this year as I was just outside the top 50 in the world and it was one of my last chances to get into the WGC-Accenture World Match Play and the Masters. I enjoyed the week as I played beautifully, especially on the last day, when I was seven under at a canter. I could have been a few less than that. I played really well.”

The tournament benefits from strong local support as one of the highlights of Qatar’s sporting calendar

but also attracts many visitors from the UAE, which will host 2013 European Tour events in Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the weeks before and after the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters.

The 2013 Commercial Bank Qatar Masters will once again feature a mixed field of established champions and up-and-coming young talent, but with US\$2.5 million up for grabs along with valuable ranking points, it’s not a tournament to be taken lightly.

While Lawrie will fancy his chances of victory and another chance to lift the iconic Mother Of Pearl Trophy, there is sure to be a strong field taking to the Doha course.

With players attending the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters being announced nearer the time, you can stay up-to-date by checking out the Middle East Golfer Facebook page for news.