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Golf 2015: Desert Swing Is The Gem Of The Sunshine Tour

The European Tour opens its 2015 golf schedule in Johannesburg South Africa with the South African Open, but quickly moves to Abu Dhabi to start the Desert Swing. The Desert Swing is without a doubt, the Gem of The Sunshine Tour for golf fans in Europe, and around the world.

Abu Dhabi

The desert swing begins in Abu Dhabi with the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship on January 15th, and will include a host of European Tour stars. Rory McIlroy will be on hand, as well as the world number two, Henrik Stenson.

Martin Kaymer is the all-time winner in Abu Dhabi, with his first Falcon Trophy coming in 2008, and back to back wins coming in 2010, and 2011.

Spaniard, Pablo Larrazabal beat Rory McIlroy, and Phil Mickelson last year by one stroke for his third, and last European Tour win. The last American to win this event, was Chris DiMarco in 2006. Rickie Fowler will be on-hand this year to represent the USA, and should finish well.

Henrik Stenson needs to only win in Abu Dhabi to complete the Desert Slam. He has won the in Dubai with two victories in the DP World Tour Championship, and won the Dubai Desert Classic in 2007. Stenson won in Qatar in 2006.

The Abu Dhabi Golf Course is managed by Troon Golf, and the par 72 championship layout plays to 7600 yards for the big boys. It was designed by Peter Harradine, and opened in 2000.

Qatar

Sergio Garcia won the 2014 Commercial Bank Qatar Masters last year, in a playoff with Fin, Mikko Ilonen. It was Garcia's last of eleven wins on the European Tour, and his last win on any tour. Garcia has eight wins on the PGA Tour, with the last coming at the 2012 Wyndham Championship.

The field in Qatar is becoming increasingly strong as this year, 2013 US Open Champ, Justin Rose will join Henrik Stenson, and defending champ Garcia as the marquee players in a strong European Tour field.

The Doha Golf Course was designed by Peter Harradine, and opened in 1996. It is yet another par 72 layout in the desert, and plays to a length of 7600 yards.

With a \$2.5 Million Dollar purse, the Qatar Masters features the smallest purse on the Desert Swing, with the HSBC Abu Dhabi Championship offering \$2.7 Million Dollars, and the Dubai Desert Classic coming in at \$2.65 Million.

The Qatar Masters tees off on January 21st, and hands out a trophy on Sunday, January 24th.