

Kaymer wants more Abu Dhabi delight

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Three-time Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship winner Martin Kaymer will tee it up this week looking to add to his trio of titles, but he was quick to stress that this course is very different to the one he last won on in 2011, thanks to a series of changes to toughen the UAE layout in recent years.

Thicker rough and tighter fairways have made scoring much more difficult on the **Peter Harradine** designed Abu Dhabi Golf Club, and as a result the two-time Major winner believes he is by no means the man to beat, but hopes his comfort on the greens will see him claim a fourth desert win.

Kaymer said, "My first start on The European Tour has been here since 2007, so it was not quite from the beginning, but this will be the ninth time now and I've had success here. The golf course has changed quite a lot though, unfortunately, because I really, really liked it the way it was, but it's tough to say if it has become more difficult or easier.

"For me it has become a little bit more complicated, as they have changed a few greens, a few tee boxes, so it's therefore not a given that I will win this. A lot of people have said that they only have to beat me this week, but it's not only me as there are a few other guys out there and it's always an open competition.

"I think the key was always that I putted really, really well on those greens, as it was not very difficult to read the lines for me. Sometimes you just have golf courses where the greens really suit your eye, you don't need to think much, and you don't doubt yourself if you pick the right line.

"That was the main reason why I played so well, and I didn't miss many fairways in the past either. I hit a lot of fairways, I think 11 or 12 per round, and the golf course was a lot shorter in the past, so if you putt well and hit a lot of fairways it's tough to shoot a bad score."

Kaymer is joined in the UAE by a field chocked full of top talent, including course record holder and World Number Two Henrik Stenson, who fired a ten under par 62 in the third round of the inaugural event in 2006.

Justin Rose is making only his second appearance in this event after a runner-up finish two years ago, while US Ryder Cup star and World Number Ten Rickie Fowler has also travelled to the Middle East for his latest European Tour start, ahead of a planned appearance at the Irish Open later in the season.

Other notable names in the field for this year's tenth edition also include defending Champion Pablo Larrazábal, the man who preceded him as victor – Jamie Donaldson – and the original winner of this tournament, Chris DiMarco.