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Spanish stars try their hand at calligraphy



Pablo Larrazabal (left), Ali Fakhri and Rafa Cabrera-Bello are schooled in the art of Arabic calligraphy during the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters at Doha Golf Club

Spanish stars Rafa Cabrera-Bello and Pablo Larrazabal sampled a little local culture at the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters after receiving a lesson in Arabic calligraphy at the end of the second round at Doha Golf Club on Thursday.

“It’s nice to try things like this. It’s fun,” said Cabrera-Bello, who has twice finished third at the tournament, including last year when he missed the playoff by one shot.

Cabrera-Bello explained why he and many other Spanish stars enjoy the US\$2.5 million tournament, which sits at the heart of The European Tour’s desert swing.

“It’s just like back home. It’s sunshine normally, a little breezy, we play in short sleeves and I kind of like that the fact that there’s sand all around,” said Cabrera-Bello, a two-time European Tour winner. The Spaniard considers the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters one of his favourite tournaments and said he has always felt at home on the Doha Golf Club’s **Peter Harradine**-designed layout.

“I think it’s a long hitter’s course,” he said. “I’m not the longest hitter, but I would consider myself one of the longer hitters. I also like it because there’s a lot of wedge play if you’re driving well and my wedge play tends to be good. As well as those things, the course suits my eye. The first time I came here, I liked it and I’ve enjoyed myself every time I’m here.”

Rafa was in second place after his first-round 66 and after a second-round 73, he was just four shots off the lead before a 70 in yesterday’s third round pushed him down to tied 15th going into today’s final round.

“I’ve been close a couple of times, had a couple of top-threes here,” he said. “It’s one of my flagship events.”