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# HARRADINE BATTLES THE ELEMENTS TO BECOME VICTORIOUS

December 13th, 2016

## 9<sup>th</sup> SGSC MEN'S OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP



WINNERS OF THE 9<sup>th</sup> SGSC MEN'S OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

### Day 1 - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Yesterday's 1<sup>st</sup> round of the Sharjah Golf & Shooting Clubs Men's Open Golf Championship supported by Air Arabia produced some thrilling golf to set up an exhilarating 2<sup>nd</sup> and final round today.

The 36 hole gross strokeplay event played over the Peter Harradine layout tested 72 of the UAE's best amateurs with brisk winds making scoring tougher as the day drew on. The early starters had a distinct advantage as they played their front 9 in relatively benign conditions. From around 0:30 the wind freshened and the course played upto 3 shots tougher.

MENA tour star Rayhan Thomas (DCGYC) set the early pace getting to 4 under, but a double bogey on 15 stalled his progress as he stuttered back to level par. Five time and defending champion Michael Harradine (SGSC) played exceptionally patient and controlled golf. Level par through 16 holes, playing through the toughest of the conditions, the Swiss birdied holes 16 and 17 to put himself in join pole position to capture his 6<sup>th</sup> title as he puts the finishing touches to his preparations for Asian Tour qualifying school in January. However performances of the day came from 19 year old Ahmad Skaik (TMD) and 12 year old Arjun Gupta (EGC). Emirati Skaik also played through the toughest of conditions and reached 3 under par to lead the event for the majority of his round. Skaik bogeyed the 18<sup>th</sup> hole to also finish on 70 plays in today's final group with Harradine and Thomas. Prodigy Gupta carded a 74 and tees off in the penultimate group at 2:30 having displayed all the talent and character required to win the EGF Order of Merit event, if not this year surely soon.

### Day 2 - Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Day two of the Men's Open Championship supported by Air Arabia did not fail to delivery, with the course looking and playing in truly Championship condition, Mother Nature also played her part. Similar to day one the early starters had the more settled conditions of play. However throughout the mornings play the winds

strengthened and with a few tricky pin positions on Greens measuring at close to 12 on the stimp meter the course was providing a great test of golf.

The second day welcomed back 69 of the UAE's leading armature golfers to participate in one of only two walking events on the EGF's calendar. The morning starter continued with their difficulties out on the golf course after day one, the best gross score from the morning came from Mikhail Pinto on a score of 79 and gave the afternoon players an insight into what a tough test awaited them out on the links.

As the tee times continues it was fantastic to see such strength in depth of talent and a mixture of golfing master craftsmen and new up and coming junior talent from the various different clubs in the UAE. Certainly a three ball which drew attention to the youth talent was the penultimate group where the average age was just 15, Arjun Gupta from Emirates Golf Club in the end was the stand out performer in the youth trio taking the home Best day 1 Gross title.

The battle for the Championship title really did go down to the wire. At the start of the day Mena Tour star Rayhan Thomas was 2 shot back from UAE National player Ahmad Skaik and five time Champion Michael Harradine. After seven holes Rayhan had been able to imply pressure on the two leaders with a well crafted Birdie, and one of only two on the fifth hole for the two days. After a Bogy from Michael and a few dropped shots from Ahmad it was all to play for going into the back nine. Unfortunately for Ahmad his title contentions wavered in the windy conditions throughout the back nine, he was however able to maintain his place in the prizes and concluded on 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Gross Championship. As Ahmad's title race dwindled the battle between Rayhan and Michael become ever more fears until a momentarily slip in concentration lead to back to back Bogies on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for Rayhan. It wasn't over however as the remaining two holes were playing exceptional difficult, especially the 18<sup>th</sup>. It was playing every inch of its 435 yards, back into the gusting 20mph wind. Michael would need to keep his foot on the pedal and ensure Rayhan didn't get back in the race. In true Champion style Michael made two Pars to close out the event for a 6<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club Men's Open Championship. Congratulations to Michael, a well deserved title on an overall score of 144.

