

# BUSHER DEFENDS

## HIS TROON ABU DHABI PRO-AM TITLE AFTER TERRIFIC FINAL ROUND

It felt like déjà-vu in the ever-growing Troon Abu Dhabi Pro-Am 2020 with Robbie Busher finding red hot form in the final round on the Abu Dhabi Golf Club's National Course to pip his close friend Joe Heraty to the post in the championship.



Joe Heraty's Pro-Am team were wire-to-wire winners in Abu Dhabi.

The tournament, which this year took place across all three Troon Abu Dhabi courses, started at Saadiyat Beach Golf Club in windy conditions and was a challenge for the professionals – never mind the amateurs. There were 25 teams competing with a strong line-up of professionals that included former European Tour winners, current Ladies European Tour players and MENA Tour golfers.

It was tight at the top after the first day on the Gary Player-designed course with Heraty, Busher and LET golfer Noemi Jimenez Martin all shooting a one under par 71 to tie for second place with Emanuele Canonica leading the way after a 3 under par 69.

The second round took place at Yas Links Abu Dhabi, which is the first time this stunning Troon course had been

added to the championship format. The Kyle Phillips-designed track certainly suited the eye of Tom Shadbolt with the Englishman shooting a spectacular 66 to join Heraty at the summit of the leaderboard on four under par. Busher's solid round of 70 left him a stroke behind the two front runners heading into the final day.

After a night of go-karting at Yas Marina Circuit, the golfers needed to be just as quick off the mark in the final round of the Pro-Am with all to play for with a number of golfers in contention for the title.

Taking place only a month after the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship, Abu Dhabi's National Course designed by Peter Harradine was in immaculate condition and promised true test of golf for the final round.

Defending champion Busher put himself in pole position for victory after going on a



“It feels great to be the champion again because it's always nice to win here, I've won twice already at Abu Dhabi Golf Club so I feel comfortable around here and was confident that if I played nicely in the final round I'd give myself a chance of victory and I did so it's fantastic.”

*Robbie Busher*



four-hole birdie run from the second before picking up another shot at the eighth to leave him five under par for the front nine.

He made two more birdies to open up a two-shot lead over Heraty going into the 14th. Shadbolt was even par for the final day on the front nine but then three birdies on 10, 13th and 14th put him into contention as Busher made double bogey on the 14th. It was a thrilling finale with Busher and Heraty both tied at the top but Heraty missed a crucial putt for par on the 17th to give Busher a one shot lead going into the final hole of the tournament. Busher handled the pressure impressively by getting up and down for birdie. This meant that Heraty needed an eagle on the iconic 18th to force a play-off but could only manage a par to give Busher the win.

#### DEFENDED IN STYLE

"It feels great to be the champion again because it's always nice to win here," said Busher. "I've won twice already at Abu Dhabi Golf Club so I feel comfortable around here and was confident that if I played nicely in the final round I'd give myself a chance of victory and I did so it's fantastic. Things kind of went my way in the final round because when I didn't hit a good shot I got quite lucky with the result and I holed some key putts."

When this event first started in 2018 there were eight teams, last year there was 18 and this year 25 but this is the first time the tournament has been on all three of the main Abu Dhabi courses so it just shows how the Pro-Am is progressing by the year.

"This year's Troon Abu Dhabi Pro-Am is definitely an improvement on last year," added the champion. "There are more teams and the three courses we get to play on are a great test with three different grasses so it was lots of fun for everyone and I'm



Joe Heraty (l) and Tom Shadbolt (r) in full swing.

really happy I got to play in this event again. Hopefully next year there will be even more teams and the event will be even bigger."

It was heartbreaking for Heraty who lost in similar fashion last year to Busher after missing a five foot putt for birdie on the 17th – a hole that hasn't been kind to him. However, Heraty's Pro-Am team were wire-to-wire winners after producing three fantastic rounds of 88, 93 and 85 Stableford points to beat Team Martin by three points.

The team were also champions last year but Heraty mixed it up with new teammates Blanca Rivollier, Steven Hall and Dara Poulsen starring in the dream team.

"It's been a fantastic event and we would like to thank Troon and all the staff at the three courses for an excellent week," said Hall. "We are all super happy because we thought we maybe threw it away at the end but we managed to win by three points. I

think it was the perfect Pro-Am partnership because we all dove-tailed really well and our Pro had some great rounds, Dara was smashing bombs off the tee and Blanca was holing putts so we were a great combination over the three days. We will definitely return to defend our title next year!"

#### GROWING BY THE YEAR

Cluster General Manager, Francisco de Lancaster David, was delighted with the growth of the three-day tournament and believes the event can expand even more in the years to come:

"We're really happy with how the event went and having 25 teams this year is testament to the hard work our team has done in the last couple of years to grow the event to this stature.

"With the addition of Yas Links under the Troon umbrella, we now have the opportunity to really showcase the destination. It's very rare that you'd have the chance to play three courses of this high standard so we can only assume that this Abu Dhabi tournament is going to get bigger and better.

"It was great to see Robbie (Busher) defend his title from last year. He had an amazing final round in tough conditions against a very strong field so deserved the victory.

"The competition side of the event is important but it's also important for the amateurs to enjoy their time in Abu Dhabi which is what we tried to showcase this year by adding go-karting to the schedule against former Formula One driver Heikki Kovalainen.

"The Westin has been a great partner again this week and has been a fantastic place for the players to stay and we will look to see how we can improve the experience even more next year."



The go-karting at Yas Marina was thrilling for all and helped take the golfers' minds off the serious business on the course!