

18 January 2015

Onward to Doha

So after week one of the European Tour's Desert Swing, we have a first-time winner and next week we beam our pictures onto the Sky Sports screens from the rocky land of Doha in Qatar.

Having played the first Qatar Masters as far back as 1998, it's another event that has grown in stature during the last 17 years. The first winner was my fellow Scot Andrew Coltart and he joins our team this week.

The US PGA champion of 2002 made his European Tour debut with us in Abu Dhabi and Rich Beem is a welcome addition. Rich is a fine colleague and will be in the commentary box on many of our PGA Tour events this year. He will also join us for the Irish and Scottish Opens to be played at Royal County Down and the delightful links of Gullane in East Lothian.

Rory and Martin take a back seat this week, yet once again we have a good quality field for Doha which has the same course designer as Abu Dhabi. Peter Harradine is well respected in his field and Doha is more rugged than last week's venue.

They have changed the grass on their greens and also changed the water treatments to the turf so we will see a different course from years gone by. Sergio Garcia is the defending champion after a thrilling final round last year.

Part one of the Desert Swing produced a big surprise, and it will be interesting to see what part two brings us. Just a reminder that the tournament starts on Wednesday and has a Saturday finish. Speak to you from the Doha desert on Wednesday morning. Ewen.