

Veteran golf course architect Peter Harradine calls for more 'fun' courses in the UAE

Abu Dhabi Golf Resort Manager Luke Sacco says the re-designed course will be comfortable for all levels of golfers when it opens for play in the 2025 – 2026 season



Luke Sacco, the Resort General Manager at Abu Dhabi Golf Resort and Spa.

Veteran golf course architect Peter Harradine has stressed the need for more 'fun' golf courses for the normal player after helping with the re-design of the Garden Golf course at the Abu Dhabi Golf Resort and Spa.

Harradine, who designed the original course in the late nineties believes that there are too many 'Championship' courses and not enough champions.

Following recent significant investment into resorts, especially the golf club and course, Khaleej Times met up with the Resort General Manager, Luke Sacco for a project update.

Abu Dhabi Golf Club and National Course was designed by UAE-based Harradine in 1998. It has since hosted 16 consecutive editions of the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship on the DP World Tour, as well as the 2023 Eisenhower Trophy.

The nine-hole Garden Course was closed earlier this year, the plans for the re-design were all confirmed and signed off and ground was broken. The project will be completed and ready for play for the new 2025 – 26 season in just over 12 months.



Offering a status report of the project Sacco said: “The re-design will reflect Peter Harradine’s thoughts – the original designer. We want the golf course, which will again be floodlit, to be comfortable for all golfers – especially for new golfers and beginners and to encourage fast and fun golf. It is styled as an executive golf course.

“It will bridge the gap between our Golf Academy and our Championship Course – and encourage all our juniors and beginners, onto the executive golf course and then provide options for all the golfers.



Peter Harradine

“It will have impressive landscaping with sustainability in mind,” he added. “As with the back-nine holes of the National Course, we will have the lighting targeted on the playing areas and, we promise, it will ‘almost’ be like playing in daylight.’

“We all have to adapt and provide facilities that our existing and new customers require – this is our mantra,’ concluded Sacco.”

Peter Harradine added: “We are obviously always influenced by the owner or committees of the various golf courses with our designs. Our philosophy in this case was to produce the same type of course as was originally intended when it was first constructed - namely a fun course for the ‘normal’ player.

“For that reason, the original course was called the Garden Course. The decision to include that nine-hole course in a 27-hole loop was a complete mistake by the then-owners and operators. It was the other 18 holes that was the so-called ‘Championship’ Course.’



Ground has been broken on the redesign of the Garden Course at Abu Dhabi Golf Club

“All over the world we have too many ‘Championship’ courses and not enough champions,” Harradine added.

“There will purposely be no lakes, not many hazards or bunkers – just enough to defend the greens.

“It will also have a natural desert feel - similar to the Doha Golf Course,” he said.

Harradine concluded: “I suggest that all the UAE golfers go and play the Doha Golf Club in Qatar – it is one of my best and continues to win accolades and awards as a genuine Desert-style golf course.”

The course will have three sets of tees; White, Yellow and Red.

The White Tee Course will play at a maximum of 2,755 yards as a Par 34 as below:

1 – 361 yards. Par 4.

2 – 153 yards. Par 3.

3 – 384 yards. Par 4.

4 – 524 yards. Par 5.

5 – 408 yards. Par 4.

6 – 114 yards. Par 3.

7 – 285 yards. Par 4.

8 – 180 yards. Par 3.

9 – 346 yards. Par 4.

Total – 2,755 yards. Par 34.