



# Gulf Weekly SPORT

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# FALDO WANTS YOU!

**EXCLUSIVE**

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**R**IFFA'S Royal Golf Club in Bahrain will host the inaugural Faldo Series Middle East Championship which aims to help develop and inspire the next generation of golf champions.

The kingdom beat off stiff competition to host the event from Dubai and impressed the organisers with its 'business friendly' attitude and willingness to encourage junior players from across the region to compete.

The event will take place on October 2-3 and the club is actively pursuing entries in order to see the cream of regional junior golf come to Bahrain.

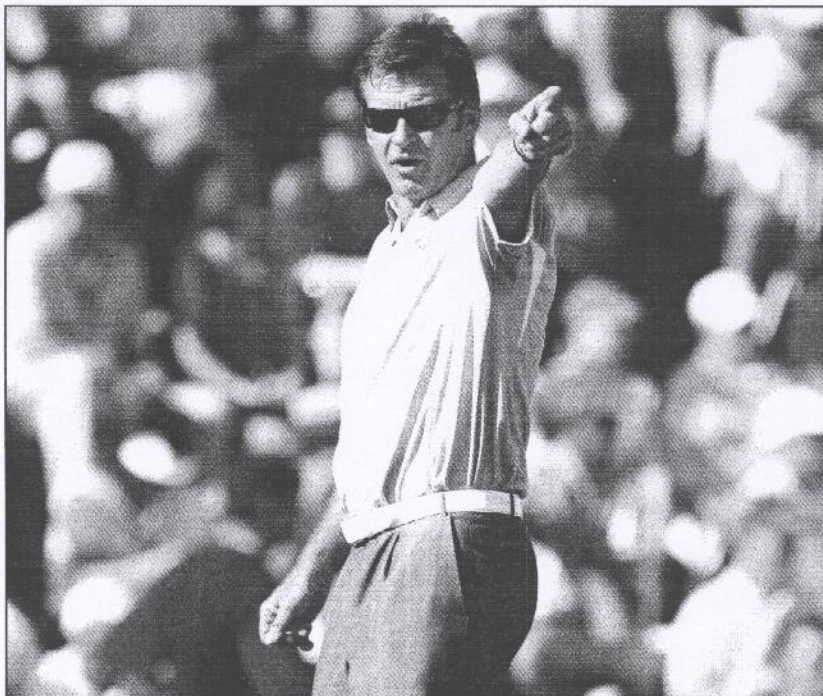
Michael Braidwood, the Royal Golf Club's general manager and a PGA professional, told *Gulf Weekly*: "This event is great for Bahrain and the sport in general as it focuses on the youth. We need more kids to play and if they have a chance to compete in such a prestigious event with the chance of going to the grand final in Mission Hills, China, and meet Nick Faldo himself, what more incentive do you need!"

"This is one of the many activities we are doing in conjunction with the Bahrain Golf Association to develop youth golf. Our plan is to see more Bahraini players coming through at the top level in order to keep Bahrain firmly at the top of Arab golf."

However, the event will not be just a platform for the rising stars of the game, as part of being a host venue the club aims to create a weekend of golfing activities for children of all abilities and for ones who have never experienced the sport before. Mr Braidwood added: "The more kids that we can get down to the club over that weekend the better!"

The club, currently in talks with national carrier Gulf Air which is keen to support the sport at a grass-roots level, is also seeking other sponsors who would like to back the prestigious international event.

Among the favourites likely to



**ENCOURAGING YOUTH:** Nick Faldo wants more youngsters playing golf and more champions from Asia

impress during the challenge is Bahrain Golf Club's Abdulla Jalal, 19, who experts believe has a good chance in the under-21 section. His handicap is currently four and he recently represented Bahrain in the GCC Team Championships in Kuwait which Bahrain won by one shot over the UAE.

There are also a couple of promising local youngsters in the under-18 section who could go on to impress as this might just be the incentive

they need to practice harder over the summer.

For the fourth consecutive season, Faldo has announced a schedule that features more tournaments in more countries.

As well as Bahrain, Thailand and The Philippines will be joining this year's schedule - the Faldo Series Asia will feature a record 15 tournaments in 12 different countries.

Supported by UBS, Mission Hills Golf Club and The R&A, the Faldo

Series Asia's first tournament in The Philippines will be staged at TAT Filipinas Golf Club near Manila.

Thailand will also return to the schedule in October with the date and venue set to be announced soon.

With the new season teeing-off in Chinese Taipei in June, more than 1,000 talented young golfers - boys and girls aged 12 to 21 - will take part in the Faldo Series Asia this year and benefit from the unique combination of tournament experi-

ence and expert advice that Faldo hopes will help to develop Asia's next generation of champions.

The six-time Major winner said: "I want the Faldo Series Asia to help as many young golfers as possible, so for more countries to come on board for the fourth year running is really encouraging."

"The enthusiasm and passion for golf is already here; hopefully now we can help talented golfers to gain more tournament experience and younger children to simply try the game. In the long-term I hope this will get more youngsters playing golf and more champions emerging from Asia."

Endorsed by the Asian Tour and the Asia Pacific Golf Confederation, the climax of the season will be the Grand Final in March 2010, an R&A World Amateur Golf Ranking event which Faldo will once again host at Mission Hills in China, home of the Faldo Series Asia.

As well as spending time with the golfing legend, over 60 finalists will compete for five invites to the Faldo Series Grand Final in Brazil plus the opportunity to play in a flagship Asian Tour or Ladies European Tour event for the overall boy and girl champion.

Aiming to win a hat-trick of Faldo Series Asia titles this season will be Rashid Khan of India. In March 2009 at Mission Hills, the 18-year-old from Delhi became the first player to successfully defend his Faldo Series Asia crown, replicating the success of European Tour stars Nick Dougherty and Oliver Fisher, both back-to-back winners of the Faldo Series in Europe since its launch in 1996.



**CONTENDERS:** Bahrain's Abdulla Jalal won the 2007 Bahrain International Airport Junior Open trophy and, right, Rashid Khan with Faldo

**FALDO SERIES ASIA SCHEDULE 2009/2010**

Tournament	Country	Venue
2009		
June 2-3	Chinese Taipei	Sunrise Golf & Country Club, Taipei
June 23-24	Singapore	Singapore Island Country Club
July 2-3	China	Shanghai Sijiport Golf Club
July 22-23	China	Mission Hills Golf Club, Shenzhen
August 4-5	China	Lakeview Golf Club, Kunming
August 8-9	Vietnam	Ocean Dunes Golf Club, Phan Thiet
October TBA	Thailand	Venue TBA
October 2-3	Bahrain	Royal Golf Club, Riffa
October 15-16	Hong Kong	Kau Sai Chau Golf Club
October 24-25	Malaysia	Royal Perak Golf Club, Ipoh
October 28-29	The Philippines	TAT Filipinas Golf Club, San Pedro
November 3-6	India	Royal Calcutta Golf Club, Kolkata
December 5-6	Japan	Shishido Hills Country Club, Kasama
2010		
January 11-12	Indonesia	Damal Indah Golf BSD Course, Jakarta
March TBA	China	Mission Hills Golf Club, Shenzhen