



## Amr Abou El Ella Wins Pan Arab Individual Championship

After a solemn promise that a new breed of golfers would dominate the Red Sea Open Men's Championships, 2011 saw the return of the Old Guard.

Amr Abou El Ella showed how he has dominated Egyptian amateur golf for three decades by returning to Soma Bay for a five stroke victory over veteran Bahraini golfer Nasser Yacoub. The two shared the lead

after the first round, both shooting 2 over 74s, but Amr pulled ahead by two strokes after day two and never looked back. "I don't drive the ball as long as I used to," says Amr, "but the rest of the game is still there. Now it's Issa's turn [his oldest son] to hit the 300 drives."

Issa managed a fourth place finish a stroke behind Abdel Monem El Shafai on the wind-swept course.

As expected, the turnout was down this year with no golfers coming from Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, with just a scattering of players from the rest of the Arab countries. The Arab Spring has not yet produced a golfing summer.

The full team from Bahrain swept the senior men's division. Abdulla Sultan Al Hakam not only ran away with the first place, but also shot

the best round of the tournament, a 73 on the second day.

Egyptian resident Sabine Repond from Switzerland dominated the women's division, shooting 86 and 83 for a whopping 23 stroke victory over Maha Senoussi, who edged out Nagwa Kamy by a stroke in the long-running battle of these two Egyptian golfers.

At the prize presentation, Abu Soma Chairman Dr. Farid Saad promised to consider moving the date of the tournament next year so that it would not conflict with an important tournament in Morocco that is also played in early July. "We will even consider



playing in late summer," says Farid, "because Ramadan will come during July for the next several years, so we will eventually have to move the tournament later in the year anyway." Farid promised to keep everyone apprised of the new dates in good time.

As much as the good golfers come to show their skills, another group of not-so-good golfers come every year to Soma Bay to play in the two day Stableford competition and to have a good time. Again, there were some fewer players this year, partly due to the exodus of foreign residents after the revolution, some of whom did



not return to Egypt preferring to stay in their home country through the rest of the school year and the summer holidays.

Seif Shaheen made history at the tournament by scoring the first hole-in-one in the ten year history of the competition. It came on the 14<sup>th</sup> hole, a challenging par three that requires a strong shot into a three-quarters prevailing wind. The green sits above the Red Sea, with daunting gullies to the left and right and a sand traps guarding the front and right rear. By chance, courtesy of Seif's wife Tilly Mulder, we have a shot of him teeing up on the hole.

### Soma Bay Update

The drop in tourism after the January revolution has not slowed Soma Bay's push to create more tourist facilities and houses for those lucky enough to have a vacation home at the most spectacular site on Egypt's Red Sea coast. In between playing, giving out trophies and



taking care of business during this busy week, Soma Bay Chairman Dr. Farid Saad found time to give Golf in Egypt a quick view of what's new at Soma Bay.

The Marina, next to the Kempinski Hotel, is opening its shops, restaurants, and outdoor cafes. A dozen big boats are docked nearby, some available for fishermen and divers, others for the lucky few who own them.

The Sea Front Suites at the Sheraton have been a popular venue for families and by September another 16 will be available for families and small groups to enjoy truly waterfront accommodation.

The Diving Hotel is in full Swing with its Key of Life swimming pool, beachfront dining, evening parties and the long dock from which snorkelers and divers can experience perhaps the best diving location on the African coast.

Work is well underway for the apartments next to the third fairway. They will feature a variety of apartments that the owners can make available to the resort management for rental.

The Cascades is now complete with its fascinating architecture that gives practically every guest a different view of the golf course and the sea. The many terraces have proved so popular that work is almost complete extending both the main dining room terrace and the patio in front of the practice green.

All of these improvements will make the resort just a bit more enjoyable the next year when Soma Bay holds its twelfth annual Red Sea Open. Mabrouk to Dr. Farid Saad, Major Mansour, Course Superintendent Mohamed and all of his colleagues for putting on a great week, and working to produce and even better one next year.

