

Global legends and local hopefuls hit the fairway as Championship looks to build a sustainable future

Play is underway at the Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship. The increasingly prominent date in the Middle East's sporting calendar teed off at the Bahrain Royal Golf Club, with triple Major winner Pádraig Harrington headlining a field of top DP World Tour players.

"It's always fun to be back here," said the Irish legend. "It's great, there's a lot of people staring to think about the game, play the game, there's a bit of a buzz about ...announcing that this tournament's here for the next ten years."

The Championship is set to remain a fixture in Bahrain until at least 2036, following a deal between the DP World Tour and the country's Olympic Committee. It's one of seven events on the Tour's International Swing.

The Bahrain Olympic Committee's Executive Director of Operations Ahmed Abdulghaffar said he is proud of *"the progress we have made in developing a strong, internationally respected sporting ecosystem. This event leaves a...lasting legacy by inspiring future generations."*

Now in its third year under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the tournament looks to celebrate Bahrain's growth as a sports tourism destination while putting environmental sustainability centre stage.

Solar-powered hospitality units and battery systems are expected to save an estimated 13,400kg of CO₂ compared to 2025. Free water refill stations have been installed around the course to cut plastic waste.

Last year's edition attracted visitors from over 170 countries and injected more than \$10.5 million into the economy.

"The tourism sector is supporting this tournament very much and it's developing further. Bahrain is a destination not only for tourism but also for business and this, ...as well as other platforms that the Bahrain Olympic Committee are promoting, strengthens the position of Bahrain very well," said Freddie Schmeisser, DP World Tour Head of Championships and Business Development in the Middle East.

Back on the greens, Harrington lined up alongside former champion Dylan Frittelli, current International Swing leader Jayden Schaper and 2025 Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year Martin Couvra.

Also bidding for glory were multiple DP World Tour winners Paul Waring, Cabrera Bello and Bernd Wiesberger, alongside Thriston Lawrence, Pablo Larrazabal and Ewen Ferguson. At the age of just 17, Yanhan Zhou made his first DP start outside China.

This year, three local heroes - Ahmed Alzayed, Khalifa Almaraisi and Ali Mohamed Alkowari - made it to the Royal Golf Club through Bahrain's national qualifying system. They are part of efforts to provide Bahraini players with invaluable high-level experience and increase local involvement in the game.

"It's great for the kingdom of Bahrain to come here and to do our best and to grow the game here. I know they don't have as many players but the golf industry is growing," said Spanish star Pablo Larrazábal.

For golfers from home and abroad, the score to beat was 61. Any player to break the course record set last year by Brandon Robinson-Thompson will receive a \$70,000 bonus through the Nexo initiative. The total tournament prize fund stands at \$2.75 million.

Elsewhere, the Championship Village offers a full programme of entertainment including a 100-metre zip line, dedicated kids' zone, live music, a traditional Bahraini souq and a wide range of food and beverage options.