

Publication: *Gulf Today*

Country: *UAE*

Date: *29 January 2008*

Page: *17*

Circulation: *36,000*

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Ernie Els (left) and Khalid Al Zarooni, President of Dubai Sports City at the launch of The Els Club on Monday.

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Article: **Cont. World's First 'The Els Club' Launched in Dubai**

BY AGNELO RODRIGUES

DUBAI: A new benchmark has been set for golf in the emirates with the launch of the world's first 'The Els Club' here on Monday.

Golf legend Ernie Els - the world's current number five ranked golfer and former British and US Open champion unveiled his club at Dubai Sports City (DSC), the first in the facility that is to house the ICC Cricket Stadium and the ICC Global Cricket Academy. The Manchester

United Soccer Schools, The David Lloyd Tennis Academy among others.

"It's a big day for myself and the company. The Els Club at Dubai Sports City will be a truly timeless, world-class golf experience for players at all levels," Els said at a press briefing.

"I was in Dubai for the first time in 1993 and never in my wildest dream thought that after 15 years, I would have my golf course here," he added alongside a host of VIP attendees and leading fig-

ures from the world of sport which included former World No1 tennis star Martina Navratilova, cricketing great Andrew Flintoff, South Africa's Rugby Captain John Smit and Manchester United legendary keeper Peter Schmeichel.

While Els has designed courses in North America, Asia, and Africa, only a select number of developments worldwide will bear The Els Club name, the hallmark of facilities which will benefit sub-

stantially from direct and ongoing personal input from Els and his team.

And, significantly, only The Els Club at Dubai Sports City will serve as the global base for the golf legend's international design business operation. Els has made a further personal commitment to the project as he will have a home and base for his international business at Dubai Sports City.

"The Els Club is the first completed venue in Dubai Sports City, and it

has been constructed and presented to exceed world-class standards. We thank Ernie Els and his team for the excellent work they have done here over the last few years, and we welcome the Els family and the Els Design team to our rapidly growing community," said Khalid Abdulrahim Al Zarooni, President of Dubai Sports City.

The Els Club which officially opens in March has a course that stretches 7,538 yards from the back tees.

In addition to the links style golf course, The Els Club will boast a 60,000 square foot Mediterranean-style clubhouse currently under construction, where members and guests will have access to a private lounge, state-of-the-art meeting and conference facilities, and varied choice of dining outlets.

The Els Club will be managed by Troon Golf - the world's leader in upscale golf course management, development, and marketing.