

# Countdown underway for Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship

Prestigious press conference officially launches 2026 event at Royal Golf Club

Manama

The countdown to the 2026 Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship is officially on following a prestigious press conference at Royal Golf Club today, with an international field of leading DP World Tour players confirmed for the event.

Multiple Major winner Pádraig Harrington will headline the field, joined by Masters champion Sergio Garcia. The championship will feature a strong Olympic presence, with Harrington, Garcia, Matteo Manassero, Guido Migliozzi, Thomas Detry, Ashun Wu, Bernd Wiesberger, Rafa Cabrera Bello, and Antoine Rozner all having represented their nations at the Olympic Games.

Past Bahrain champion Dylan Frittelli will return to the Kingdom of Bahrain, as the field is further strengthened by a strong contingent of multiple DP World Tour winners, including Rolex Series winners Paul Waring, Cabrera Bello and Wiesberger, alongside Thruston Lawrence, Pablo Larrazabal, and Ewen Ferguson. The lineup is completed by current Race to Dubai leader Jayden Schaper and 2025 Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year Martin Couvra.

The event, attended by His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa and representatives from the General Sports Authority and Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, shared insight into the tournament's final preparations, two weeks out from action getting underway.

The Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship, held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, is set



to take place from January 29 to February 1 and will showcase a field of stars from more than 25 different countries.

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Bahrain, highlighted Bahrain's rising profile as a global sports destination, noting that hosting the DP World Tour attracts golf enthusiasts and visitors, supports tourism growth, and strengthens the Kingdom's position as a sports tourism hub. She emphasised the role of international media in showcasing advanced infrastructure for major events, and commended Bap-

co Energies for sponsoring this round of the tournament, highlighting the positive impact of such partnerships across related sectors.

Mark Thomas, Group CEO of Bapco Energies, added: "It is an honour for Bapco Energies to serve as title sponsor of the Bahrain Championship. As we bring world-class sporting experiences to our community, we are also proud to work with our partners to reduce fuel consumption and emissions, making sustainability a core part of this event's legacy."

With Bahrain now a buzz, His Excellency Faris Al-Koo-

heji, Secretary General of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, spoke of his excitement for this year's edition.

"This event highlights Bahrain's commitment to promoting sports excellence and reflects our vision of engaging our community. The tournament provides an opportunity to create meaningful experiences for local and international golfers, while shining on a global stage."

Tom Phillips, Director of Middle East for the DP World Tour, echoed the sentiment.

"The Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship holds a special place on the DP World Tour's

global schedule. This tournament is as much about showcasing world-class golf as it is about celebrating Bahrain's rich culture and proud heritage, and we are thrilled to return to Royal Golf Club and partner with Bapco Energies to deliver an event that again leaves a lasting impact."

Three Bahraini amateurs have also been confirmed to play on home soil. Ahmed Alzayed, winner of the Best Bahraini in King Hamad Trophy, Khalifa Almaraisi, the top ranked Bahrain Golf Association player of 2025, and Ali Mohamed Alkowari, having won the National Team Quali-

fying tournament, are all set to tee it up at Royal Golf Club in a fortnight's time.

"We're delighted to host such a prestigious tournament with a world-class field and local emerging talent at Royal Golf Club," said Captain Waleed from the Royal Golf Club. "We have received outstanding feedback from players and visitors, and we are excited to build on that momentum this year and into the future."

Now in its third year, the Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship has had significant impact since its inception, with an increase in tourism, economic activity and global recognition. Last year saw more than \$10.5 million injected into the local economy, while internationally, fans tuned in from upwards of 170 countries, resulting in a household reach of over 537 million. The tournament has also helped increase the number of golf rounds, membership requests and overseas visitors to Royal Golf Club.

This year's event will aim to build on the momentum, while also pioneering environmental initiatives focused on energy provision, including powering hospitality units and structures with solar energy and batteries.

Fans will be able to witness all the golfing action with free general admission tickets, while elevated and premium experiences are also available. Off the course, a full programme of fun, including a 100m zip line over the top of the Royal Golf Club, kids' entertainment and activities, traditional Bahraini souq and a wealth of food and beverage options make it a must-visit event for families and friends alike.

## Keys overcomes serve demons to win latest Australian Open warm-up

AFP | Adelaide

Defending Australian Open champion Madison Keys overcame some first-set serve wobbles to win her latest warm-up match for the opening Grand Slam of the year yesterday.

The 30-year-old American, who will be seeded ninth when the Australian Open begins on Sunday, beat Czech teenager Tereza Valentova 6-4, 6-1 at the Adelaide International.

Keys, who won in Adelaide last year before going on to lift her maiden major, served up seven double faults in the opening set against the 18-year-old.

She improved in the second, breaking twice and converting her third match point to reach the quarter-finals after an 85-minute workout on court.



Madison Keys (L) is congratulated by Tereza Valentova

"Experience helps get through the tricky moments," Keys said. "I was able to take momentum in the second set and play really well. I had to raise my level. You have to take your chances on any opportunities you get."

World number 60 Valentova is one of a number of rising young talents on the women's circuit.

## Mitchell century powers New Zealand to historic chase in India

AFP | Rajkot

Daryl Mitchell produced a commanding unbeaten century as New Zealand pulled off their highest successful run chase in India, beating the hosts by seven wickets in the second one-day international in Rajkot yesterday to level the three-match series 1-1.

Chasing 285, New Zealand reached 286 for 3 in 47.3 overs, with Mitchell's 131 not out off 117 balls steering the visitors home with 15 deliveries remaining at the Niranjan Shah Stadium.

New Zealand's reply had wobbled early as India's fast bowlers reduced them to 46 for 2 before Mitchell and Will Young turned the contest around with a decisive 162-run stand for the third wicket.

Young made a composed 87 off 98 balls, giving Mitchell the platform to attack India's spin-



New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell celebrates his century

ners, particularly Kuldeep Yadav, as the pitch quickened under the evening lights and New Zealand ended an eight-match losing streak against India in one-day internationals.

Earlier, India posted 284 for 7, built around a high-class un-

beaten 112 from KL Rahul after the hosts were sent in to bat on a surface that gripped in the afternoon.

Shubman Gill had earlier struck 56 to help India to a strong start before New Zealand's bowlers, led by seamer

### Scorecard

Australia 567 (Head 163, Smith 138, Tongue 3-97) and 161 for 5 (Labuschagne 37, Weatherald 34, Tongue 3-42) beat England 384 (Root 160, Naser 4-60) and 342 (Bethell 154, Webster 3-64, Starc 3-72) by five wickets

Kristian Clarke with figures of 3 for 56, applied the brakes through the middle overs.

Mitchell, who brought up his eighth ODI hundred, was named player of the match after finishing the chase alongside Glenn Phillips, who contributed an aggressive unbeaten 32 off 25 balls.

The result gave Rajkot's new stadium its first successful ODI chase in five matches and set up a high-stakes series decider in Indore, where batters are expected to dominate in traditionally high-scoring conditions.

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