



US's Yoseph Dance with Qatar Open Amateur Golf Championship trophy, in Doha, on Saturday. (HANSON K JOSEPH)

Yoseph beats Hamed in shoot-out, wins Qatar title

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THE 26th edition of the Qatar Open Amateur Golf Championship had a very exciting end at the Doha Golf Club on Saturday.

Of Friday's front runners for the title, a tie between Bahrain's Hamed Mubarak and US's Yoseph Dance generated a lot of heat on a colder and windy evening.

Eventually, it was the 16-year-old American who won this year's title in a shoot-off.

Both of them scored 225 before the shoot-out took place, and Dance emerged the winner. The third place was bagged by Abdulla Sultan of Bahrain who lagged behind by just two points with a gross score of 227. Saleh Ali Musbah of Qatar managed to claim the fourth place with a gross score of 229.

Speaking to *Qatar Tribune*, a visibly excited Dance said that the tournament matched the standards of any other international tournament.

"It was a great experience

for me as an amateur. For us, the opportunity to play on a turf like this which can match any other international golf course doesn't come every day," said Yoseph Dance.

He added that he was really happy with his performance in the tournament. "There were better players than me in the tournament and the fact that I emerged at the top makes me believe that I can do better in the near future."

However, the teenager had to work hard for what he has achieved. "I used to practise

daily for two to four hours. That helped me a lot. I got familiar with the turf before hand," said Dance.

He also said that he had been in good form for the last one week. "I did prepare hard for the tournament. So I guess that also played a part in my win," added Dance.

The teenager is now hoping that he would be able to play in the prestigious Qatar Masters Open to be held in February this year.

"Well, I am really looking forward to that with excite-

ment, and hope I am able to maintain my good form throughout the season," Dance exulted.

Meanwhile, the first runner-up, Bahrain's Hamed Mubarak Afnan didn't allow Dance an easy win. They had to return back to the tee twice as no one was ready to give up. However, at the end Dance's golfing came one up over Afnan's.

Players were also felicitated for their individual

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performances. The best gross scorers of all the three days, William Shucksmith (England) for day one, Ghanim Al Kuwari (Bahrain) for day two and Saleh Ali Musbah (Qatar) for the third day were honoured for their performances. Moreover, the top ten scorers of the tournament, which also included Indian golfer Karan Taunk, were rewarded for their good performance in the event.

The tournament Director, Dr Thani Abdul Rahman Al Kuwari thanked the participants and the sponsors at the felicitation ceremony. He said, "The Championship is now entering its third decade after its inauguration in 1983. At first, it was only known to the Gulf countries. But now the tournament has achieved international fame as it attracts amateur golfers from all over the world."

RESULTS

| Standings | Names | Scores |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1st | Yoseph Dance (USA) | 225 |
| 2nd | Hamed Mubarak Afnan (Bahrain) | 225 |
| 3rd | Abdulla Sultan Sultan (Bahrain) | 227 |
| 4th | Saleh Ali Musbah (Qatar) | 229 |
| 5th | Mathias Gladbjerg (Denmark) | 229 |
| 6th | William Shucksmith (England) | 229 |
| 7th | Jean Michael Hall (Britain) | 229 |
| 8th | Ghanim Al Kuwari (Qatar) | 231 |
| 9th | Rashid Akl (Lebanon) | 232 |
| 10th | Karan Taunk (India) | 233 |

BEST GROSS SCORES

| | | |
|-------|--------------------|----|
| Day 1 | William Shucksmith | 72 |
| Day 2 | Ghanim Al Kuwari | 72 |
| Day 3 | Saleh Ali Musbah | 74 |