

Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Open Squash Tournament Countdown to the final

By **Eugene Bonthuys** - April 8, 2011

The Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Open Squash Tournament has entered its final phases, with the semi-finals taking place tonight, followed by the finals on Saturday evening.

The event has drawn its strongest field ever, with most of the women ranked in the top 20 in the world taking part, including world number one and defending champion Nicol David.

This year, the men's event also sees the participation of top-ranked players like former world number one Ramy Ashour and top 20 player Alister Walker, along with top squash talent from across the region.

What remains to be decided is who will lift the trophy at the end of a week of intense competition, which has already seen some of the well-known local players as well as big-name visiting players fall in the early rounds of the tournament.

The main sponsors are Cedrus Investments, the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, and venue sponsor Camana Bay.

Sports tourism flourishes

Premier McKeever Bush was full of praise for the event and its impact on raising the profile of sports tourism in the Cayman Islands.

“Considering the recent growth of the NORCECA Volleyball Championship Tournament and the success of the Squash Tournament through the years, it's evident that sports tourism in the Cayman Islands is continuing to flourish and we can clearly see how these types of large-scale sporting events translate into an increase in business for the tourism private sector,” he said.

The event, which has grown in stature over the last couple of years, has also helped Cayman acquire the right to host other prestigious tournaments in the future.

“Cedrus Investments is proud to be part of this tournament and supporting the squash programme and is excited by the world-class tournaments that Cayman is hosting in the future, including the 2012 World Open and 2013 World Junior Championships,” said Rani Jarkas, managing director of title sponsor Cedrus Investments.

The tournament, which started at the South Sound Squash Club on Sunday, moved to the glass court at Camana Bay on Wednesday evening. The glass court has become an integral part of the tournament since it was introduced in 2010.

Glass court

The all-glass court, made up of 72 glass panels and the supporting framework, was brought down from Canada and assembled by a team from Manta World Sport. Raising the court took five days, and set-up for the entire event, which also included erecting the tent and bleachers and installing the sound, lighting and scoreboard equipment, took a total of 12 days, according to Joanne Gamage of Camana Bay.

“The position of the court has been reversed so that the front wall now faces The Paseo. As visitors walk down The Paseo toward The Crescent, they will have an amazing view of the court as players hit the ball against the front wall,” she said.

“The cool breezes that blow over the Harbour onto The Crescent and down The Paseo will create a comfortable atmosphere for attendees, while the surrounding palm trees and the spectacular views overlooking the Harbour will give our international viewers a true sense of the island.”

Furthermore, the open layout of the Crescent allows for bleacher seating, as well as ample standing room for non-paying spectators.

Junior focus

However, it is not just the big names of the sport that have been the centre of attention this week, with numerous schools and junior players taking advantage of the presence of these players. Some attended games at the South Sound Squash Club to see the stars in action, while others were fortunate enough to get on court with some of the best players in the world for squash clinics.

This is one of the aspects of the tournament that makes it unique – that the development of the game among the junior players of Cayman is key to how the tournament is structured.

“Cedrus is very excited to be part and contributing to the junior programme that CINSAs is implementing, and we are excited about what they are doing. It is a world-class programme and [it shows] the long-term vision they have for Cayman’s youth and squash as a whole,” said Mr. Jarkas.

All profits from the 2011 Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Squash Open at Camana Bay go to the junior squash programme for CINSAs. More than \$32,000 worth of squash equipment will be donated to the programme and considerable funding (and all profits) will go to CINSAs to allow free and subsidised squash for Cayman’s juniors. During the tournament, more than 300 juniors from 12 schools will get free workshops with the visiting pros. Cayman’s elite and national junior squash teams will get to train on the glass court at Camana Bay, with profits from the tournament raffle helping fund the National Junior Team attending the 2011 Caribbean Junior Championships in Guyana.

Tickets

Tickets for the remaining matches can be purchased from The Mansion in Camana Bay.

However, even if tickets are sold out, supporters are encouraged to come to Camana Bay and enjoy the atmosphere of the event, as there will be plenty of room for non-paying spectators to view the action as well.

Schedule

The semi-finals take place tonight (Friday) from 6.30pm, starting with the men’s semi-final, followed by a junior exhibition match, and then the two women’s semi finals.

On Saturday, the action will kick off at 6.30pm with a doubles exhibition game, followed by a singles exhibition, the men’s final, the minister’s challenge and wrapping up with the women’s final.

Cedrus Investments

As the title sponsor of the tournament, Cedrus Investments became involved in the tournament in 2010 when the company purchased the glass court that had been brought in for the tournament in order to ensure access to a glass court for all future events.

Cedrus Investments offers expertise in private wealth management, asset management and financial advisory services.

The firm is led by seasoned investment management professionals who have held senior-level positions at some of the world's largest investment firms and have decades of international experience in all aspects of capital markets.

Since its inception, Cedrus' mission has been to be the leading investment service provider offering knowledgeable investors objective advice, creative global solutions, aligned incentives and transparency.

Cayman Islands Department of Tourism

The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism has been an event sponsor since the inception of the Cayman Islands Open.

“The Department of Tourism is delighted to be on board as a sponsor of the Cayman Islands Open Squash Tournament for the third consecutive year and will continue to show our commitment to this and other sporting events in Cayman as the framework for sports tourism is implemented,” said Shomari Scott, acting director of tourism.

This year, the Department of Tourism also promoted the Cayman Islands during the Tournament of Champions Squash tournament, held in Grand Central Station in New York in January.

This was the perfect opportunity to showcase not only the Cayman Islands, but also to promote the Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Squash Open.

Camana Bay

Stretching 500 acres from Seven Mile Beach to the North Sound, the vibrant Town of Camana Bay is a mixed-use, planned community developed by Dart Realty in collaboration with a team of architects, city planners, landscape designers, wind, water and lighting experts. The Town Centre, filled with Caribbean-inspired architecture, beautifully designed courtyards, streets and

walkways, opened in 2007 and includes shops, restaurants, garden and commercial offices, a six-screen cinema, 60 apartments and various civic spaces. Camana Bay is now in the planning phase for the Town's residential communities and amenities. For the second consecutive year, Camana Bay is the host site and gold sponsor for the Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Squash Open.

Cayman Financial Review

Cayman Financial Review is the only magazine that promotes the Cayman Islands' financial services industry at a local and international level.

Cayman Financial Review is published quarterly and is distributed in print and online to relevant organisations and associations worldwide, as well as at key financial conferences.

Cayman Financial Review is proud to be a sponsor of the Cayman Open for a third year. "Dan Kneipp continues to do a great job in organising this event which showcases the sports tourism opportunities of the Cayman islands on an international platform. The Cayman Financial Review will continue to support this fantastic event as it develops in the coming years," said Teritia Peart of Cayman Financial Review.

Cayman Airways

Since 1968 Cayman Airways has been serving the Cayman Islands as the country's national flag carrier. With a fleet of four 737-300 jet aircraft, the airline provides service from Grand Cayman to numerous regional destinations, as well as destinations across the US, while two Twin Otter aircraft serve the Sister Islands.

Cayman Airways has been a sponsor of the Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Squash Open for the past two years and has also sponsored the shipment of all squash equipment for the junior squash players, Several of the staff members are also avid players.

Cayman Islands National Squash Association

The Cayman Islands National Squash Association is the governing body for the sport of squash in the Cayman Islands. The role of the Association is to promote the game of squash at a junior, national and international level for as many players as possible, for players of all ages from all over the world who reside in the Cayman Islands. The mission of the Association is to introduce squash to Cayman youth, develop local talent and produce the champions of the future, while

encouraging sportsmanship and promoting participation in the sport and a healthy lifestyle. The Association runs various programmes for juniors, including a schools programme, as well as an after-school programme. These programmes benefit greatly from the donation of equipment and profits from the Cedrus Investments Cayman Islands Squash Open.