

WEAR PINK ON FRIDAY AT THE OMEGA DUBAI LADIES MASTERS

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Emirates Golf Club will be dressed in pink for the third round of the Omega Dubai Ladies Masters on Friday 12th December and everybody coming to the tournament is encouraged to wear pink to support Breast Cancer Arabia. The Challenge Match with Anna Nordqvist, Shanshan Feng, Laura Davies, Pomanong Phatlum, Maha Haddioui and Sophie Gustafson at Emirates Golf Club on Monday evening opened the season-ending Ladies European Tour event, when the star players used pink bags to help show their support of the charity. Team spirit and camaraderie was the flavour of the evening as Dame Laura Davies and Maha Haddioui combined well to win the Challenge Match at the nine-hole par-3 course. The duo returned a two-under 25 to warm up ahead of the main competition which begins on Wednesday. The all-Swedish team of Anna Nordqvist will join Sophie Gustafson and the pairing of Shanshan Feng (China) and Pomanong Phatlum (Thailand) finished joint second, one shot behind. The Davies-Haddioui team rattled off three birdies in a row from the fourth to take control of the proceeding. They bogeyed the last, but it only tended to narrow the margin of their victory.

“I have always liked watching Laura Davies. It was pretty exciting playing with her in a greensomes format,” said an elated Maha. “I think this was the third time I have played with her. She is just an amazing player and I have always looked up to her,” she added.

In 2006, the World Cancer Congress mandated that breast cancer should become a healthcare priority in Arab countries. In spite of this, in many countries, very little is still being offered in the way of medically produced and backed, current and correct breast cancer awareness.

‘Knowledge is power’, as we all know. However, where that knowledge comes from and how it is delivered, has a huge effect on how it is received and acted upon.

Across the Middle East there needs to be ongoing, sustainable breast cancer awareness programmes – awareness should not be limited to one month during the year. What is currently on offer is very basic awareness – simply stating ‘early detection is the best protection’ is only a very small part of awareness. People need to know more about the disease, diagnosis, treatments, etc., so that:

1. myths and fear about the disease can be dispelled
2. the subject can be raised more easily within communities
3. more women will be able to make better informed decisions about their health and treatment plans

There are still large numbers of women receiving the wrong investigations, surgery and treatments simply because they are not being offered the right type of awareness and information. Many are still being offered and are having very expensive and invasive operations in order to make a breast cancer diagnosis – these operations are sometimes quite unnecessary in order to make an actual diagnosis, and what is actually needed in many of these situations is a non-invasive and relatively inexpensive investigation. How many women are being subjected to operations that they don't really need all because they are not being made totally aware.

Breast cancer awareness needs to be promoted across the Middle East to improve treatment and care of the disease. Awareness needs to be more than making people aware of awareness events – information has to be available at these events which currently isn't happening.

Mortality rate – According to the UAE Cancer registry, breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UAE. It is the second leading cause of death in women, accounting for 28 per cent of all female deaths in the UAE. The disease has a notably high incidence and a mortality rate of 44 per cent due to late diagnosis.” – Source: Gulf News – September 2010. However, these figures could be misleading as some women (with the financial means to do so), would have had their cancers diagnosed and operated on outside of the UAE and therefore no information would have been recorded.