

Berenberg Bank Masters:

GOLF-Top Seniors host golf clinic at 2010 Berenberg Bank Masters



Photo: Credit Grant Leversha

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Ahead of the European Senior Tour's Berenberg Bank Masters at The Links at Fancourt, senior golf professionals shared their knowledge, skills and love of the game with a group of SA Golf Development Board learners at a golf clinic on Wednesday, 24 March 2010.

The 10 professionals first talked to the 40 learners from Heidelberg, Slangrivier and George about important swing principles and demonstrated how they approach practice sessions.

The learners, ranging in ages from six to 15, then received one-one-one instruction from Britons Maurice Bembridge and Andrew Murray, Jerry Bruner and Doug Johnson from the United States, Zimbabwe's Tony Johnstone, and South Africans Vincent Tshabalala, Gavan Levenson, Jeff Hawkes and Chris Williams.

The learners also had a chance to question the seniors on how to excel at the game of golf and, of course, collect those all-important signatures.

"I learnt how to strike the ball correctly and how to practice properly," said 10-year-old Reagan Strydom, a grade two learner at Hibernia Primary who particularly enjoyed the unorthodox exercises he did with former French Open winner Tshabalala.

Chandree Roberts, a grade 10 scholar at Kairos Secondary, will be representing the SAGDB at the Rose Bowl in Durban later this month. She gained valuable insights from her session with Brembridge. "He gave me a few tips that really made sense; now I just have to practice, practice and practice some more."

"Golf is a difficult but rewarding game, but it is important to get the basics right," said Bruner, a three-time winner on the European Senior Tour. "Professional golfers understand the value of golf development. These young golfers all hope to become champions and it's our duty to give back to the game in this way."

Doug Johnson thoroughly enjoyed putting the 40 learners through their paces at the chipping green. "At our age, it's a two-way deal – while they get the benefit of our experience, we enjoy the experience just as much," said Johnson. "It's great to watch the future of golf unfold in front of your eyes and there is nothing better than knowing you may have changed someone's life forever."

Johnstone, a regular campaigner in South Africa since the Seventies, agreed.

"You know, this is where we all started," said Johnstone, winner of the 2008 Jersey Seniors Classic and 2009 Travis Perkins plc Senior Masters.

"Someone spent time with us, too, and inspired us to become the champions we are today. It is a privilege to share our time with these children."

Johan Erasmus, the SAGDB Development Manager Southern Cape, said that the children interacted well with the professionals.

"The most important thing for the kids was them seeing first hand what a pro does," said Erasmus. "It was great, and the learners enjoyed it immensely."

"They asked a lot of questions and the golfers also talked to them about things like education, fitness and discipline, so the kids can understand what it entails to become a pro one day. They talked about the commitment and dedication, but most importantly going out and enjoying the game."

The €500,000 Berenberg Bank Masters tees off from 26-28 February 2010 at The Links at Fancourt. Entry is free and there is ample parking available, as well as public catering.

For more information, please contact:

Lali Stander
0027 (0)82 990 7150