

## **South African Blind Golf Association (SABGA)**

### **ISPS Handa SA Open – 2021**

The COVID-19 pandemic has again played havoc with many aspects of our lives in the last two years, not least of which was our golf. We are fortunate to have been able to stage an ISPS Handa SA Open event this year and last, which has not been feasible in most other countries.

This year our Open was again held in the Gauteng province, but moved from Glendower Golf Club to the Lake Club, Benoni.



The Benoni Lake Golf Club is situated on the banks of Benoni Lake, which comes into play on three of the last four holes (often referred to as their “Amen Corner”). Large undulating greens, added to the challenge.

Unfortunately, due to a serious lack of rain (in the Gauteng dry season) the course suffered. While the limited water supply was judiciously used to keep the greens in good condition, the fairways and rough were very bare. This made some shots, in particular short pitches, very challenging.

The rains did start, however, while we were there. Fortunately the heavy rain and hail happened overnight, and we were able to play the event in good weather. The course will, no doubt, be back to its usual top standard before too long with such downpours.

While we did not manage to attract any overseas players this year, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions in their home countries, all of the top SA players were present. Although not large, the field was very strong. The 5 South Africans who have Protea Colours, Garrett Slattery (defending gross champion), Ernst Conradie, Morne Els, Leon Strydom and Johan Kotze, were joined by Charlene Pienaar (our top ranked lady golfer), Manie Blom and our teenage prospect Jontey Kotze.

After the first round Garrett had a solid lead over Johan in the B2 category, but the B3 category was wide open with Leon and Morne tied, and Jontey only a few shots back. Jontey was the winner of our Development Trophy only two years ago, and it was extremely encouraging to see him competing once again for the B3 title.

The net competition was also wide open, with Charlene also being well in the mix.

Strong performances from the B3 leaders in the second round saw Jontey forge his way to 2<sup>nd</sup> (after a count-back against Leon), but Morne prevailed winning both the B3 and overall net. Garrett retained the B2 title, and Charlene the ladies.

Net results:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Morne (136), guided by Charl Enslin.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jontey (138), guided by Benoni caddie Solly.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Leon (140), guided by Lizell Strydom.

The SA Champions were as follows:

- B2 Champion: Garrett (201), guided by Erich Kliem. Runner-up: Johan.
- B3 Champion: Morne (194), guided by Charl Enslin. Runner-up: Jontey.
- Ladies' Champion: Charlene (216), guided by her father.

### Thanks

The SA Blind Golf Association would like to express our sincere thanks to all of those people and organisations who provided financial and other support which made this event possible.

Thanks to the team from Benoni, from management, the pro shop, catering, waiters and caddies.

Last, but by no means least, the players would like to thank the dedicated group of guides and caddies who helped us navigate our way around the course. It was great to see several of our top guides there (who have travelled with us overseas on several occasions). Apart from those guides already mentioned above, great work was done again by Tino and Etienne. Special mention must go to the ever-willing Jurie Mare, who showed his versatility by stepping in to guide Johan at short notice.

