

28 May 2023

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, I want to express a deep gratitude to all involved in the creation and launch of GolfRSA and whose resolute support has carried us for the last eight years. A heartfelt thank you to the board of directors, and the office bearers of the South African Golf Association and Womens Golf South Africa for your dedication, commitment, passion and belief in this organisation.

We have come out stronger than ever in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the successes and growth of the organisation in 2023 bears testimony to the faith in leadership to deliver a new vehicle for the administration, operation and growth of amateur golf.

We hosted our full schedule of national, inter-provincial, team and provincial events this year, competed on a full international calendar for the first time since 2020 and launched some new and exciting initiatives in collaboration with among others, The R&A and Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, to grow the game in South Africa.

With the influx of international competition to our shores, our members' performances on national and international level and with the new projects, the organisation remains on an upwards trajectory.

Several of our GolfRSA Squad members did South Africa very proud in the global arena.

Christo Lamprecht undoubtedly made the biggest international impact in 2023, but Gia Raad, Altin van der Merwe, Jordan Burnand, Aldrich Potgieter, Christiaan Maas, Kieron van Wyk, Caitlyn Macnab, Cole Stevens, Tyran Snyders, Charlotte Millard and Ivan Verster also distinguished themselves on the world stage.

As did George native Ben van Wyk, who will be inducted into the squad in 2024. The University of Georgia student followed in the footsteps of Wilco Nienaber and Jono Broomhead to become the third South African winner of the 36-hole qualifier in 128th Amateur Championship.

Our sixth annual GolfRSA Champion of Champions series, delivered by The Courier Guy, drew record participation across South Africa and ultimately, 96 golfers qualified to compete in the seven divisions at the National Final at Pecanwood Golf & Country Club.

Six first-time champions were crowned, including Gina da Silva (Centurion) and Sean Howell (Durbanville) in the A-Division, Russo Roberts-Gouws (The Els Club Copperleaf) and Gershwin Titus (Upington) in the B-Division, and Herine van der Merwe (Standerton) and Jaco de Lange (George) in the C-Division. Thabiso Dijo from Bryanston Country Club successfully defended his Caddie Division title.

In collaboration with the R&A, GolfRSA launched the GolfSixes League South Africa and the GolfRSA Race to the R&A 9 Hole Challenge to promote the faster, shorter version of the game, attract new players and assist clubs to generate extra income.

The GolfSixes was introduced with activations at Krugersdorp, Modderfontein, and Ruimsig, drawing a variety of participants, including mid-amateur golfers and beginners aged 12 years and younger, including members of the South African Golf Development Board programme in Gauteng. The GolfSixes League South Africa will be deployed nationwide in 2024.

Given the short lead-time, we adopted a countrywide lucky draw format for the first GolfRSA Race to the R&A 9 Hole Challenge. Golfers who played at least three rounds of 9-hole golf in April were eligible, with Albratros Golf Solutions providing a list of qualified entrants. Handicaps Network Africa supervised the draw, selecting 20 winners through a random number generator process, overseen by GolfRSA senior management.

The first two amateurs to win the trip of a lifetime to compete in the R&A 9 Hole Challenge at Royal Liverpool were Jorge del Pozo, a 71-year-old engineering manager from The Lake Club Benoni Country Club, and 23-year-old Willie van der Ryst, a Chemical Engineering student at Potchefstroom University, playing out of De La Reyville Golf Club.

In 2024, each club in South Africa will run their own internal competitions and all the provincial winners will go into the Regional Final Lucky draw. The top two from each union will compete in the National Final, which will feature four rounds of nine-hole golf. The two winners will tee it up against the best qualifiers from the United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia, France and New Zealand in the R&A 9-Hole Challenge Final at Royal Troon in Scotland. In addition to competing in the unique event, the winners will also attend the practice days and first two rounds of the 152nd Open Championship at the same venue.

MEMBERSHIP

On the membership front, we saw an increase of 0.46% in the number of affiliated golfers. While the registered male golfers remained almost flat compared to last year, there was another significant rise in female golfers of 4.09% and there was a slight increase of 4.36% in junior golf.

In July 2023, GolfRSA and HNA introduced the Caddie Handicap initiative and, at the close of 2023, we had 253 registered caddies from 35 clubs on the system.

Registered rounds declined by 2.28% on the HNA system to 4 175 266, which was chiefly attributed to the significantly higher rainfall and flooding experienced across the country in 2023.

FINANCIALS

GolfRSA provisional surplus was R 203 355 as of 31 December 2023, exceeding the budget of R 63 197 by 68%.

From an income perspective, GolfRSA realised income 13.6% more than budget, due in part to an increase in revenue from HNA, who contribute to an annual Management fee, as well as a contribution to tournament sponsorship. An increase in affiliation numbers was also a contributing factor.

The increased reserve fund and positive interest rates achieved, resulted in a substantial increase in revenue, compared to budget, for this line item.

The new initiatives – the GolfSixes League South Africa and the GolfRSA Race to the R&A 9 Hole Challenge – reflect as unbudgeted expenses, thus contributing to the excess actual compared to budget, but these costs will be covered by funding from The R&A for special projects, which results in a nett nil effect overall.

As of 31 December 2023, the operating cash position of GolfRSA is positive. GolfRSA also have a healthy reserve fund, which has been increased further investing the previous year's surplus.

GOLFRSA SA SWING

We were thrilled to see the return of international players to our GolfRSA South African Swing, with seven teams competing in the African Amateur Stroke Play team event and representation from over 20 countries across the three tournaments.

As always, the series of events commenced with the African Amateur Stroke Play Championship at Leopard Creek, however unrelenting rain and damage caused by storms forced GolfRSA Tournament Director Neil Homann to declare a 36-hole result. Aldrich Potgieter, the 2022 Amateur champion, led at the halfway mark and was declared the winner.

Aldrich carried his good form to the South African Stroke Play Championship at Mount Edgecombe, but it was Frenchman Martin Couvra, who stole the show with a remarkable performance.

Over a span of 234 holes and nine days, the 19-year-old member of the French Golf Union National Squad proved unstoppable, clinching victory in the 72-hole South African Stroke Play Championship, the 36-hole Proudfoot Trophy, and the South Africa Amateur Championship. He became the first amateur to triumph in all three events in full regulation play within the same calendar year.

In the women's events at Mount Edgecombe, Samantha Whately went wire-to-wire to win the Championship Division of the South African Women's Stroke Play Championship, Kyra van Kan lived up to her top billing when she romped to a 11 & 10 victory over fellow GolfRSA national Squad member Ellandri van Heerden in the South African Women's Amateur Championship.

Local golfer Charlotte Phipps triumphed in the Silver Division of the stroke play event, while the Flight Division in the match play event was won by 17-year-old Jemima Ullyett, who beat German mid-amateur Stephanie Kiefer 2-up. It was a fantastic achievement for local golfer in her SA Amateur debut.

With The R&A staging the inaugural Africa Amateur Championship and Africa Amateur Women's Invitational Championship at Leopard Creek in 2024, GolfRSA will replace the former African Amateur Stroke Play Championship with the GolfRSA International Amateur Championship at Houghton Golf Club. In addition to keeping the men's team competition, the inaugural event will also feature a women's division.

NOMADS EVENTS

The Nomads Golf Club of South Africa, through their Furtherance of Golf programme, once again sponsoring a full programme of junior events on our national calendar in 2023.

Border's Ben Weber celebrated his first national victory in the Nomads SA U-15 Challenge, while Filip Sakota (Inland | ERPM), Jordan Wessels (Inland | Irene), Jack Buchanan (Coastal | St Francis Links) and Bryan Newman (Coastal | Selborne) had success in the National Order of Merit events.

Dan Bennett shattered three South African golfing records as he marched to a wire-to-wire 21-stroke victory in the Nomads SA Boys U-19 Stroke Play Championship at Pecanwood, with Pearce Levin breaking through on the national circuit with his 3 & 2 Match Play victory over Charl Barnard.

Kyra van Kan won the SA Girls Rose Bowl at the Lost City Golf Course, but she was denied the coveted Nomads double by Gia Raad, who edged her over the last few holes of the Gary Player Country Club to win the SA Girls Championship.

Sarah Gutuza won the Silver and nine-year-old Milani Sikhonde the Bronze Division in the SA Girls Rose Bowl at the Lost City Golf Course. In the SA Girls, Cherise Staelberg, Abigail Thambiran and Shane van der Merwe respectively won the Silver, Bronze and Copper Divisions. Both events drew record entries, and the other divisions were highly contested, underlining the growth in women's golf.

Western Province's Matthew Lotz won the Nomads SA Junior International, with a notable third-place finish from national squad member and SAGDB standout Devon Valentine at Rondebosch Golf Club.

Marno Lange won the final round tussle with fellow GolfRSA National Squad member Johndre Ludick to lift the SA Boys U-17 Championship title at Port Elizabeth Golf Club by two strokes, while Min Jun Heo triumphed in the Nomads Gowrie Farm U-15 Challenge.

Last year's SA Boys U-17 champion Janko van der Merwe collected a second Nomads title in the North & South Junior Championship at Pecanwood. Jordan Groenewald took the individual honours in the SA U-13

Championship while captaining Southern Cape to victory in the team competition at Magersfontein Memorial Golf Club.

It was wonderful to see 10 first-time winners step up in 2023, but also former winners returning to the winner's circle in a higher age bracket. The national junior events are an incredible stepping stone for the new generation, and we salute the Nomads Golf Club of South Africa for creating opportunities for our juniors to further their careers and gain invaluable experience through their continued support and investment in junior golf in South Africa.

SUNSHINE TOUR JUNIOR SERIES

We were privileged once again partner with the Sunshine Tour in growing junior golf with four national events in 2023.

GolfRSA National Squad members Jack Buchanan and Janko van der Merwe made it two wins each in 2023, with Buchanan winning the Dimension Data U-19 Junior Open in George by five strokes and Van der Merwe coming up trumps in the Cape Town Junior Open at Clovelly.

Eastern Province's Shaun Viljoen sealed a hard-fought first national victory in the Dimension Data U-15 Junior Open, while Gauteng North's Leonard Swart broke through for the first time when he went wire-to-wire in the Joburg Junior U-15 Open at Kyalami Country Club.

GOLFRSA NATIONAL SQUAD

The eighth year of the GolfRSA National Squad was once again highly successful. Although we only celebrated four victories, the squad members produced impressive results on the world stage, and once again, dominated the Open Amateur and Junior events and the provincial tournaments, winning over 80% of the tournaments on the men's and women's circuits.

Since the inception of the National Squad in 2015 we have had the following significant results:

- **21** individual wins in international events and victory in the **2019 Toyota Junior Golf World Cup** (no international travel in 2020 | 2021)
- Squad members have won **27** times during the international GolfRSA SA Swing events since 2016, which includes the SA Stroke Play, SA Women's Stroke Play, the SA Amateur and SA Women's Amateur and the African Amateur Stroke Play Championships
- **11** South African juniors have made the International Teams on world amateur golf ranking in the three Junior President Cups played since 2017, which is almost a third of the total players selected during that time.

In a year of history-making moments, Christo Lamprecht became the fourth South African, and the third GolfRSA National Squad member in the last six years, to win the prestigious Amateur Championship title in June.

A month later, he continued to make us proud by becoming the first South African to receive the Silver Medal as the leading amateur in the 152nd Open Championship. Christo was only the second amateur to have led The Open Championship in 50 years. Bobby Jones, who also attended Georgia Tech like Christo, was the last amateur to lead The Open after the first round at Royal Liverpool, in 1930.

Since the inception of the World Amateur Golf Ranking in January 1997, Cameron Johnson and Nicol van Wyk both reached the No. 3 spot. However, in September, Christo surpassed them, becoming the first South African to reach the pinnacle of the world list.

On the collegiate circuit, Christo won the Ben Hogan Collegiate Invitational and the OFCC / Fighting Illini Invitational and added to a long list of accolades at Georgia Tech:

- Golfweek All-American (first team)

- GCAA All-American (first team)
- GCAA All-American Scholar
- GCAA All-East Region
- All-Atlantic Coast Conference
- Fred Haskins Award finalist

Gia Raad became the first South African winner of the English Girls Stroke Play Championship. The 16-year-old Johannesburg golfer fired two eagles on her way to a final round 68 at The Caversham Golf Club to triumph with a staggering five shot victory on 12-under-par 276.

Altin van der Merwe impressed during his GolfRSA UK Tour debut with a runner-up finish in the Scottish Men's Open, a 10th-place finish in the Brabazon Trophy and a tie for 12th in the St Andrews Links Trophy. In addition to five provincial victories, he capped a breakout season as the leading amateur in the 113th Investec South African Open Championship.

Christo, Altin and Christaan Maas produced one of the best performances by a South African team in the World Amateur Team Championships in Abu Dhabi. The trio finished seventh, which marked the country's best result in the Eisenhower Trophy since a runner-up finish in 1982.

Christo, Christiaan and Tyran Snyders made the International Team for the prestigious Arnold Palmer Cup on merit, finishing first, second and third respectively in the Final Standings. Caitlyn Macnab, who was 12th in the standings, received an invitation to join the International Team.

Jordan Burnand and Ivan Verster, who were inducted into the squad in May, finished fourth overall in the Juan Carlos Tailhade Cup, notching an 11th consecutive top five finish for South Africa in the prestigious Argentinean event. Ivan finished fifth and Jordan 12th respectively in the Individual Competition. In the Argentine Amateur Championship, Jordan was joint ninth and Ivan tied for 10th. Jordan also performed admirably in his GolfRSA Squad Tour debut, finishing fourth in the Scottish Men's Open Championship and 62nd in the Brabazon Trophy.

Aldrich Potgieter went wire-to-wire to win the limited field Sage Valley Junior Invitational with a 10-stroke victory and defeated reigning U.S. Amateur Open champion Sam Bennett 5-up to lift the Georgia Cup title.

Ben Weber and Bryan Newman, who held the No 1 spot in the GolfRSA Boys U-15 rankings for the entire 2023 season, tied for 12th in the Reply Italian International Under-16 Championship. Bryan went on to claim a runner-up finish in the Scottish Boys' Open Championship and won the Nedbank Junior Challenge at Sun City.

Devon Valentine became the first SAGDB member to win in Africa with his play-off triumph in the Zimbabwe Junior Open, while Charlotte Millard won the Girls Competition. Devon also successfully defended the individual title in the SA High Schools Championship and tied for fourth in the 15-18 age group for boys in the Mandiri Ciputra Golpreneur Junior World Championship.

Kesha Louw, Jasmine Furstenburg, Gia Raad and Olivia Wood all campaigned in the R&A Girls Amateur Championship while Kyra van Kan and Lisa Coetzer flew the flag for South Africa alongside Devon Valentine and Zinan Maimane in the Mandiri Ciputra Golpreneur Junior World Championship in Indonesia.

Kyra finished fifth in the 15-18 age group, Lisa also took fifth overall in the 12-14 age group and Zinan finished eighth in the 12-14 age group in Indonesia. Johndre was joint third in the Egyptian Amateur, and fellow GolfRSA National Squad member Vuyisani Makama finished 10th at the El Gouna Golf Club.

All 11 players who celebrated successful title defences in the All Africa Junior Team Championship and the Africa Region 5 Golf Tournament were also members of the national squad.

The All Africa Junior Team Championship group included Kyra van Kan, Kesha Louw, Jasmine Furstenburg, Jack Buchanan, Keagan Crosbie, Amilkar Bhana and Jaden Deltel. This group also represented South Africa in the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup in Japan. The team that recorded South Africa's 26th successive title in the Africa Region 5 Tournament in Malawi included Altin van der Merwe, Jordan Burnand, Dan Bennett and Simon du Plooy.

Through our partnership with the Sunshine Tour, GolfRSA receives invitations to play in the Big Easy Tour and in selected Sunshine Tour events. These are valuable platforms for our top amateurs to learn about the rigours of the professional game.

Past squad members have broken through on all the major Tours, including Garrick Higgo (DP World Tour and PGA Tour), Wilco Nienaber, Dylan Mostert and Casey Jarvis (Challenge Tour), while Malcolm Mitchell, Ryan van Velzen, Luca Filippi, Deon Germishuys, Albert Venter, and Dylan Naidoo enjoyed success on the Sunshine Tour. Higgo, Jarvis and Jayden Schaper all earned the Sunshine Tour Rookie of the Year accolades.

Christo Lamprecht, Caitlyn Macnab, Christiaan Maas, Kaiyuree Moodley, Kieron van Wyk and Cole Stevens all enjoyed title finishes on the US collegiate circuit. Kaleigh Telfer and Caitlyn Macnab both qualified twice for the prestigious Augusta National Women's Amateur.

GolfRSA hosted several mens and womens squad camps in 2023 at the National Junior Development Centre (NJDC) at Leopard Creek and Serengeti Estates. Assisted camps were also held during the Nomads North and South Junior Championship and Nomads National Order of Merit at St Francis Links.

The goals of the GolfRSA national squad are being achieved and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Johann Rupert for his patronage of the GolfRSA National Squad, without whom none of the above achievements would probably not have been realised.

INTER-PROVINCIAL & OTHER TEAM TOURNAMENTS

A strong year for Central Gauteng, who scooped both premier SA IPT titles, won the Swiss Team Trophy in Women's 72-Hole Team Championship at Devonvale and the B-Section Super Senior division at the SA Senior & Super Senior IPT at Elements.

The men's premier team edged Eastern Province by 1 games point at East London Golf Club and the women's premier team beat home favourites KwaZulu-Natal by 2 points at Umhlali Country Club.

The Western Province Seniors won the SA Senior & Super Senior A-Section at San Lameer, while their junior side emerged victorious in the SA U-19 IPT at Centurion Country Club.

Gauteng North's Super Seniors were undefeated in SA Senior & Super Senior A-Section IPT, their Mid-Amateurs also scored a clean sweep to win the SA Mid-Amateur IPT at Reading and the Daisies also triumphed in the Challenge IPT at Mooinooi Golf Club.

North West won the SA Country Districts at Devonvale and earned two promotions – the Super Seniors scored a 4-point B-Section victory at Elements and their women's team won the B-Section in the SA Women's Premier IPT.

Northern Cape's mid-amateur team won the B-Section at Reading, Southern Cape clinched promotion in the Women's 72-Hole Team Championship, the Boland junior team lifted the B-Section title in the SA U-19 IPT and Mpumalanga clinched the promotion battle in the SA Country Districts.

Southern Cape came up trumps in the Nomads SA U-13 Championship, beating Gauteng North by four strokes on a team total of 1195 at Magersfontein Memorial Golf Club.

Balderstone Sports Institute pulled off a narrow one stroke victory over Grey High School in the SA High Schools Championship at Reading Country Club, while George Suid Primary scored an emphatic 22 stroke victory in the Ernie Els Primary Schools Championship at Devonvale Golf Estate.

The Coastal Team went two-for-two in the Coastal Inland Challenge, defeating the Inland Team 10.5 – 5.5 at Highland Gate Golf and Trout Estate.

MID-AMATEUR AND SENIOR

Western Province standout Greg Woodbridge came from five strokes off the pace to win the South African Senior Amateur Championship at Sishen Golf Club, joining former SA greats Morgan Phillips (2018 | 2019) and Mellette Hendrikse (2013 | 2014) with successive feats in the senior flagship event.

Woodbridge and 2023 Senior Players Championship winner Doug McCabe from North West represented South Africa in the R&A Senior Amateur Championship at Saunton Golf Club, where Woodbridge tied for fourth and McCabe finished joint 14th.

Heidi van den Berg from Gauteng North celebrated her first national success with a one-stroke victory in the SA Women's Mid-Amateur Championship. Heather Kruger won the Silver Division for a second time, and Tracy Cheetham won the C-Division in her debut in the flagship event at Parys Golf Club. Germany's Stephanie Kiefer, runner-up in the mid-amateur division, won the Senior title.

Unfortunately, the South African Mid-Amateur Stroke Play had to be cancelled due to the low number of entries. Given the healthy tussle for supremacy during the 2023 provincial events and the growth in this division, we are confident that we will have a full field for the 2024 edition at Irene Country Club next April.

TRANSFORMATION

Development and transformation of golf and the industry remains a high priority for GolfRSA, the South African Golf Association and Womens Golf South Africa.

The strategic partnership with the South African Golf Development Board (SAGDB) continues to strengthen and produce results across all 14 unions using the operations of the SAGDB for their development and transformation programmes.

In addition to the development of players of colour in the Women's National Squad, Womens Golf South Africa launched the Qalisa Squad, which is aimed at identifying and nurturing young talent at provincial level. A total of 23 girls attended the camp at Serengeti, which was hosted by National Coach Val Holland, Nicole van Pletsen and Anesu Gavaza, while National Coach Anna Becker-Frankel oversaw the nine-girl camp with Leigh-Jane Middleton at Devonvale. At this stage, the Qualisa Squad camps are one-day camps as the girls attending are very young.

The South African Golf Development Board (SADGB) receives spots in the GolfRSA Nomads Junior National Order of Merit tournaments, including the Nomads SA Boys U-19 (5), Nomads SA Boys U-17 (5), Nomads SA U-15 (5) and Nomads SA U-13 (3) Championships, as well as the Nomads Gowrie Farm U-15 Challenge and the 4 Nomads National Order of Merit Inland and Coastal events. The costs are for the SAGDB learners are financed by GolfRSA.

The SAGDB also receives up to 20 spots in the limited field of 78 players in the Nedbank Junior Challenge.

The Sunshine Tour also funds the SAGDB under our Adopt-A-Chapter initiative, which is allocated to five provincial chapters annually to be utilised for grassroots development. The allocation is determined by the SAGDB. The Sunshine Tour further creates opportunity for development through the Sunshine Tour Junior Series on the GolfRSA National Junior, with our top players given the chance to compete in the Cape Town Junior Open, Tshwane Junior Open, Dimension Data U-19 and U-15 Open and the Joburg U-15 Junior Open.

Selection for the junior events is first and foremost based on the SAGDB Performance Ranking. The balance of the spots for the unique opportunity to compete at national level against the top ranked juniors in South Africa and gain experience is then extended to players who have shown promise across the 14 unions.

Aside from outstanding international performances from Devon Valentine, Johndre Ludick, Zinan Maimane and Vuyisani Makama in Zimbabwe, Italy, Indonesia and Egypt, the SAGDB leaners also produced some solid results on home soil.

2023 Highlights

- 1 – Devon Valentine EP | Zimbabwe Junior Open
- 1 – Devon Valentine EP | SA High Schools Championship
- 2 – Johndre Ludick EP | Nomads SA Boys U-17 Championship
- 3 – Johndre Ludick EP | Egyptian Amateur
- 3 – Devon Valentine EP | Nomads South Africa Junior International
- 3 – Vuyisani Makama CG | Dimension Data U-19 Open
- 3 – Othimna Matiwana EP | SA High Schools Championship
- 3 – Kaiden Chetty CG | Dimension Data U-15 Open
- 4 – Devon Valentine EP | Mandiri Ciputra Golprenuer Junior World Championship
- 4 – Johndre Ludick EP | Cape Town Junior Open
- 4 – Eric Ncube CG | SA High Schools Championship
- 5 – Johndre Ludick EP | Nomads National Order of Merit Coastal (St Francis Links)
- 5 – Vuyisani Makama CG | Nomads National Order of Merit Coastal (St Francis Links)
- 6 – Johndre Ludick EP | Nomads North & South Championship
- 6 – Mitch Phigeland WP | Nomads National Order of Merit Inland (Irene Country Club)
- 8 – Zinan Maimane GN | Mandiri Ciputra Golprenuer Junior World Championship
- 9 – Lubanzi Tselane NW | Sun City U-13 Challenge at the Gary Player Country Club.
- 10 – Vuyisani Makama CG | Egyptian Amateur

The SAGDB was also proudly represented in the national team events, with a total of 37 players competing across the Men's and Women's Premier IPT, the men's U-19, SA Country Districts and Challenge Inter-Provincial Tournaments and the SA Women's 72 Hole Team Championship.

Mitch Phigeland and Josh Daniels were members of the victorious Western Province team that won the A-Section in the SA U-19 Inter-Provincial at Centurion Country Club, while Sergio Japhets and Romeo le Roux (captain) helped Boland to a B-Division triumph.

Lyle Pedro from Northern Cape and Milton Mlanga were also given the opportunity to compete in Scotland, thanks to the longstanding agreement with Scottish Golf. The SAGDB pair played some outstanding Links Courses, including the Old Course at St Andrews, Scotsraig, Kingsbarns, Dunbar Golf Club and Hickory at Kingarrock, visited the R&A Museum and attended two days of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship, where they could watch some of the world's top golfers in action at Carnoustie and Kingsbarns.

The SAGDB, through an agreement negotiated by GolfRSA, hosted an Elite and upcoming talent squad camp at National Junior Development Centre in Malelane. This is the same facility used by GolfRSA for its national squad camps.

The NJDC lends itself perfectly to our squad camps with all its facilities including the driving range, putting and chipping greens, bunkers and the fantastic par-three course. The different tee boxes, allow our members to

practice their long irons and wedges, while the undulating greens on the par-3 course truly tests their putting prowess.

A special thank you to Kambaku Golf Club for accommodating our squads for a round of golf during the national camps. Players enjoy competing at this challenging layout - it takes them outside their comfort zone and presents challenges they don't experience in their home unions.

R&A RELATIONSHIP

Our excellent relationship with The R&A has strengthened further in the last four years, and we have begun to play a far more active role in R&A endorsed activities.

Having represented South Africa on a number of R&A hosted video panel discussions with numerous countries during the pandemic, we continued the momentum created and sent various representatives to workshops and symposiums during 2023.

Grant Hepburn was part of a two-person panel, live on stage at the R&A World Conference answering questions and giving input regarding the development of elite players and national squad management. We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge, insight and practices and to learn from other countries to improve our service delivery here at home.

Lara Weinstein was selected to participate in the year-long Women in Golf Leadership Development Programme that kicked off in September in St Andrews. Lara was accompanied by her line manager, Anne Vermaak, to the onboarding of the program. At the same time, they utilised the opportunity to meet in person with Jack Haydon (Golf & Health initiative), Kevin Barker (R&A projects), Gemma Hunter (Handicap and Course Rating) and Jackie Davidson (Women's Leadership).

Caitlin Boekee was selected to participate in the six-month online Women in Leadership Foundation Programme, supported by her line-manager Mr Clinton Logie.

Lara Weinstein and Michael Johnston also collaborated closely with Frederik Lindgren from CPG for the GolfSixes projects.

Neil Homann continues to represent South Africa on the Rules of Golf Committee and Wimpie du Plessis on the Handicap and Course Rating Committee.

In addition to this, The R&A has generously given funding to GolfRSA for various projects to grow the game in South Africa. Examples of these projects are GolfSixes League South Africa, the GolfRSA Race to The R&A 9 Hole Challenge, Women in Golf programmes, a centralised booking platform and a program to bring social golfers under the umbrella of GolfRSA, Safeguarding & Leadership training and media coverage to amplify these projects in the public space.

We look forward to further develop these projects and we applaud The R&A for their support and guidance.

DSAC RELATIONSHIP

GolfRSA's relationship with the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) is stronger than ever.

GolfRSA received funding from DSAC in March and December 2023. The impact of this funding in 2023 was incredible and has really assisted us to grow the game of golf locally and internationally:

Education & Training

- TARS & Rules = 109 delegates across 3 seminars
- CMASA = 352 delegates & 165 clubs

Growing the Game

- GolfSixes = 404 players

Women in Golf

- Qalisa Squad = 63 girls across 4 camps
- IPT = all 14 unions

Elite Transformation

- SAGDB Tournament & Camp Support = 99 boys across 11 tournaments and additional camps
- Professional Coaching = 52 boys & 13 girls
- Fund for Women in University
- International Participation
 - Zimbabwe Junior Open 2023
 - 4 boys and 4 girls
 - Devon Valentine = Boys Winner
 - Charlotte Millar = Girls Winner
 - Egyptian Amateur
 - 4 boys
 - Finished 2nd & 4th in the Tournament

GOLFRSA / CMASA TRAINING PROGRAMME

The GolfRSA Training Programme, funded by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, was launched in July 2021 in partnership with the Club Management Association of South Africa (CMASA).

These learning programmes are specifically aimed at upskilling golf industry members.

CMASA conducted the courses over the last six months of 2021. The sessions continued 2022 with a total of 240 attendees and 110 clubs participating and there was an encouraging increase in the individual attendees and clubs that participated in 2023. There are also 24 individuals who are benefiting from bursaries to study in the CMASA Manager-in-Development (MID) specialised areas.

2023		
Webinar - Focused at Management	Total Attendees	Total Clubs
Customer Service for Super Stars	100	31
The Modern Member	64	28
Power of Perspective	68	19
The 'Why' of great customer service	57	23
Personal Branding	69	46
TOTAL	352	165
MID Online Bursaries (2022-2023)	26	

SAFEGUARDING

GolfRSA has been working on updating its Safeguarding policy under the guidance on Ripley Evans and Anne Vermaak. The policy will be launched in 2024 with continued education to the industry to support them in this infinite journey to reduce the risks in the industry.

The new policy will provide an overarching policy to cover the industry, as well as updates in the code of conduct and ethics codes, as well as the disciplinary process. It will also see GolfRSA have a reporting mechanism and independent case management team to deal with concerns.

Anne Vermaak is also undergoing the IOC Safeguarding Officers Course and was a guest speaker at the Safe Sport International Symposium on a panel with representatives from the IOC, the Commonwealth Games and Region 5. GolfRSA is also working closely with the R&A in sharing resources and ideas to support the industry in this subject.

2023 COURSE RATINGS AND HANDICAP REVIEW

COURSE RE-RATING PROCESS IN 2023

The initial Course Rating & Slope Rating System was implemented on 3 September 2018.

The World Handicap System requires all golf courses to be re-rated within three to five years after implementation and thereafter at a cycle of every five to ten years.

This is chiefly due to golf course change, including the growth of trees, changes made by greenkeepers and the Rules of Golf, which might have an effect on Course Ratings & Slope Ratings.

We are currently in re-rating phase 1 (three to five years after implementation) and have re-rated **64%** of the **423** active golf courses in South Africa. The planned schedule was slightly impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, but we aim to have the remaining golf courses re-rated by the end of 2024.

HANDICAPS

Ahead of the implementation of the 2024 World Handicap System Rules of Handicapping on 1 January 2024, two training sessions took place on 21 and 22 December 2023.

ALTITUDE ADJUSTMENT FOR BOGEY WOMEN (Implemented - 1 September 2023)

When golf courses were previously, altitude was only a factor taken into account when determining shot lengths for the following players:

Scratch Men

Bogey Men

Scratch Women

Bogey Women shot lengths remained the same whether rating a course at sea level or at altitude. The World Handicap Research Team (WHRT) concluded that altitude does indeed affect Bogey Women shot lengths, therefore all courses that were 610m or more above sea level were affected. This ultimately saw the Slope Rating for Women decrease for all golf courses that are at altitude.

We would like to thank Wimpie du Plessis, Lara Weinstein, Mike Johnston and all the volunteer raters for their dedication and commitment to these ongoing projects.

MEDIA

The media landscape continues to shift its focus, with traditional printed press leaning heavily towards the 'big sports' including football, rugby and cricket. It has become increasingly challenging for amateur sports and the "smaller professional sports" to secure unsolicited coverage

Golf coverage is almost exclusively reserved for the DP World Tour and PGA Tour, however GolfRSA – and particularly the national squad programme – did enjoy global and national coverage in the printed media with Christo Lamprecht's victory in The Amateur and his subsequent achievements. SuperSport.com. and the online sites of the South African and IOL are very supportive, and targeted releases to the community press gets great coverage.

We still have three pages in the Compleat Golfer, while SA Golf Trader and WeWomenGolf also gives us extensive coverage. The Golf Mag, however, has truly given us a fantastic platform not only to promote golf across all divisions, but also to shine a spotlight on our projects and our rising stars. It's a great vehicle for all the other stakeholders in the country, and we have had positive responses from the golf clubs we have featured. GolfRSA provides 90% of the content, photos, videos and video links, and does the editing of the magazine.

Our social media platforms, which have become a dominant form of digital marketing for amateur and secondary sports – continue to grow and has been a very effective marketing tool to increase our footprint and build our brand.

Because the various GolfRSA platforms, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube have very varied audiences and these platforms are fluid – always evolving with changing trends – it does require a lot of attention and our media department has to put extra time into analysing trends to produce content that will keep existing followers engaged and attract new followers.

The marketing and public relations industry uses followers and engagement to gauge the success of social media accounts and we are proud that we continue to maintain an upward trajectory on all our platforms. Our followers across all the platforms increased on 2023, and our engagement remains in the excellent zone, as measured by the standards set out by www.rivaliq.com, the preferred analytics platform used by PR and Marketing agencies worldwide.

(Guide fewer than 1% of followers engaging is considered a low engagement rate, average is between 1% - 3.5%, high engagement between 3.5% - 6% and over 6% followers engaging is excellent.)

Below is a short breakdown of our growth.

FACEBOOK (@Golf RSA)

Facebook is by far our largest platform and this channel garners the most engagement. The average rate of engagement in 2023 was over 20%. At the end of 2023 we reached the 17 000 mark and our 2024 target is 18 000.

Interesting to note that the audience on this channel is very broad, ranging from 18 to 90. The 35 – 44 age group makes up 27% of our following and next biggest is the 25 – 34 age group.

Photos and videos get equal shares, likes and views. Link clicks also picked up over the last six months of the year, specifically after we started to promote The Golf Mag with content links

TWITTER (@GolfRSA)

We are very satisfied with the growth on this channel. After a very slow take-off period, our followers grew from 371 at the start of 2022 to just under 4 000 at the end of 2023. We hope to reach 4 500.

Our engagement rate maintained around 4.3% for the year, with videos and scoreboards netting most of the engagement. Like Facebook, our link clicks also increased since the launch of The Golf Mag in August.

INSTAGRAM (@golfrsa)

This platform has shown the most growth in the last year, since we adapted the content to the suit a younger audience by increasing our video coverage.

The audience on this platform is dominantly 18 – 44 (24.7% fall in the 18 – 24 age group, 23.5% in the 25 – 34 age group and 21% in the 35 – 44 age group).

The most popular posts are videos, followed by photo carousels and stories.

We went from 5 500 followers at the end of 2021 to close to 9 000 at the end of 2023. The target for 2024 is to break the 10 000 mark, which comes with a host of benefits, including using Instagram as a source of income: <https://www.pathsocial.com/resources/unlocking-the-power-benefits-of-10k-followers-on-instagram/#:~:text=So%20if%20you%20have%2010%2C000,your%20reel%20in%2030%20days>.

YOUTUBE (@golfrsa)

A relatively new account that began tracking nice engagement in 2023, and we will be posting a lot more content in 2024 now that we have incorporated professional videography in the media budget.

The channel began showing substantial growth and we ended 2023 with just over 300 subscribers. We have set ourselves a lofty goal of reaching 450 subscribers in 2024. The average engagement on YouTube also averages in the excellent range, and encouragingly the shares from this channel has quadrupled.

The videos posted on YouTube are also linked to articles in The Golf Mag, which directly impacted the growth and engagement on this channel.

TIKTOK (@golfrsa)

We created this account to test the water, but this channel has a very quirky audience, and you have to be selective with content. It's been a bit of trial and miss, but the short videos, funny or unique photos and things like tough bunker shots, shots out of water or bushes, and the like appears to draw a lot more engagement than the content we post on our other channels.

One must be careful not to damage the brand, though, but manpower permitting, we will try to produce more specific content to grow this platform. We had just over 100 followers at the end of 2023 and we set a goal of 250 for 2024.

CONCLUSION

We remain indebted to all our partners and sponsors throughout the golf industry in South Africa.

We are grateful for the positive working relationships with golfers, clubs, unions, academies, coaches and fellow golfing organisations that assist us to perform our role as the governing body for amateur golf in South Africa to a high standard.

We are privileged to have the support of The R&A, the Department of Sports, Arts & Culture and the Nomads Golf Club of South Africa, and the commitment from our sponsors and partners – Titleist South Africa, Nedbank, Sun International and The Courier Guy South Africa – has been incredible.

We greatly appreciate the role that our GolfRSA Board plays, as well as the National Executive of the SAGA and WGSA, all of whom volunteer their time. We thank all of you for your time and dedication to golf.

Yours sincerely,



Grant Hepburn: CEO GolfRSA