

## Sterne sets Africa Open alight

Golfers refer to the Saturday of a tournament as "moving day", but Richard Sterne's course record in round three of the Africa Open took the saying to ridiculous lengths as he charged his way around the East London Golf Club in 61 strokes.

He turned in 31 after a string of five birdies and added six more on the inward nine in a faultless display that had even playing partners Alan McLean and Andre Bossert shaking their heads in bewilderment. "Maybe the best round of my life," was his laconic evaluation of it in its aftermath.

The hard statistics of Sterne's round tell the tale. After 10 holes in his opening round, he was four-over-par. In the following 44 holes, he picked up 20 strokes, with 11 of those coming in the last 18 he played. Not even Sterne could believe he could engineer that kind of turnaround, either: "After the practice round I think I shot about 85 and I wondered about what was going to happen here because the wind was just unbelievable," he recalled. "But when the tournament starts, you do what you have to do and so far, so good!"

He took just 10 putts on the inward nine, and it was so nearly just nine: He had a 10-metre putt for birdie at the 17<sup>th</sup> and the ball shaved the cup and rolled a foot further on. "That was the only hole I two-putted; pretty nice round," he said.

But here is the kicker - Sterne is not even in the lead!

On a day of low scoring, James Kingston shot a 65 to top the leaderboard at 18-under-par alongside Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke, who shot a 66.

"All day, I made one mistake, and for me to make only one mistake in a round of golf is pretty good," Clarke said of his bogey on 13. "But overall, I played really nicely, and the ball felt under control for the most part," he added. Control gave him five birdies and an eagle.

Halfway leader Angel Cabrera struggled his way to an even-par 72 to be 14-under in a share of sixth with Clarke's compatriot Michael Hoey and Retief Goosen.

Goosen came good, atoning for a double-bogey six on the fifth with six birdies and an eagle.

Up ahead, Darren Fichardt is lurking together with Sterne two shots off the pace after his 67, and fifth place is the sole possession of Canada's Graham DeLaet, whose faultless 64 with eight birdies paled into insignificance next to Sterne's pyrotechnics.

Sharing ninth are Charl Schwartzel and Branden Grace of South Africa, and Marc Cayeux of Zimbabwe. Schwartzel shot a seven-under 65, and lamented a cold putter, which, he believes, cost him a much lower score.