

Joy for Jonas at Africa Open

As one of Border's top three golfers, Ben Jonas is no slouch when it comes to golf. The development officer for the sport in King William's Town has been coaching young talent in the province in association with the South African Golf Development Board for the past five years.

It was the realisation of a dream for the Eastern Cape amateur when he teed off with two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen at the Africa Open at East London Golf Club last month.

The 42-year-old was thrilled to bits when he learned that he had been drawn to play with the Goose for the Pro-Am round. "It was a dream come true," he beamed after his four-hour game. "Retief is one of the most highly regarded golfers in the world and I learned a couple of tips from him which I will pass on to his young protégés.

"I always tell them you have to have a strong and disciplined mind to play golf. You don't throw your clubs around when you hit a bad shot. Retief demonstrated this very well.

Although there was a screaming east wind blowing, he did not panic when he had to swing a shot into the wind. In fact, he got a great second shot into the wind on the ninth hole with a three wood. We were all impressed with that.

"He said he was not used to the wind and if it continued the tournament would not be easy. He was also impressed with the new green which has been laid here, but gave some hints on how it should be cut in places."

One of the most beneficial parts about spending a few hours on the fairway with Goosen was talking to him about development golf, he said. "Retief mentioned that he was involved in a development project in his home province of Limpopo. I told him about some of my star pupils. We have great talent here - even kids with single handicaps."