

## Sunshine Tour set for Eastern Cape return with Africa Open

After an absence of nearly 10 years, the Sunshine Tour returns to the Fish River Sun Country Club and takes professional golf back to the unspoilt Eastern Cape coastline for the inaugural Africa Open. The Africa Open will be played at the splendid 18-hole Gary Player championship course near Port Alfred from 7-10 February 2008, where Southern Africa's best players will join the cream of the Sunshine Tour and shoot for a total prize fund of R1.2-million.

In corroboration with the Sunshine Tour and promoters, The Sponsorship Company, title sponsor Nestlife Assurance Corporation joins as the underwriter and driving force behind this event for the next three years.

"We are honoured and delighted to contribute towards the development of golf and chose this venue with that in mind. We aim to expand the growth of golf in the Eastern Cape and across the region," said Vusi Sithole, MD of Nestlife Assurance.

"We hope this brand new Sunshine Tour Summer Swing event will be the catalyst for the game to grow in Southern Africa."

With the latest addition, the Sunshine Tour will now hit a record six tournaments on its 2008 Summer Swing, which ends at the end of February, offering an all-time high of over R20-million in total prize money.

A field of 144 players will tee off on the distinctive Parklands layout that last played host to the Fish River Sun Pro-Am in 1998 and was won by seasoned campaigner, Ashley Roestoff. Invitations have been extended to 11 African countries, including Lesotho, Uganda, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana and Madagascar, for their top-two players to participate in the Africa Open.

"Professional golf in our emerging country is growing and we are delighted to be involved in the development of the game here," said Sun International Group Sports and Promotions manager, Alastair Roper.

"This wonderful initiative will place South Africa firmly on the international golf map and we hope to assist in a sporting extravaganza that we all can be proud of.

"We are especially delighted to welcome back the Sunshine Tour, which has grown enormously and established itself as a significant force in world golf."

Marketing director of the Sunshine Tour, Grant Wilson, welcomed the launch of the Africa Open, which will be the first new event to make its debut on the 2008 Sunshine Tour.

"On behalf of our talented players and rising stars, I would like to extend our fullest appreciation to Nestlife Consortium for its vision and support towards professional golf in Southern Africa," said Wilson. "We are excited with this new initiative and believe it can capitalise on the vast potential that golf in Africa has to offer.

"After a very long absence, we are very pleased to strengthen our partnership with Sun International by taking a record sixth Order of Merit event to the prestigious Fish River Sun. We look forward to growing this event over the next three years into a major event on the world golf calendar." The Africa Open follows on the Nashua Masters, hosted by the Wild Coast Sun Country Club from 31 January to 3 February 2008. The qualifying round details for the inaugural Africa Open will be released shortly.