

## **Oosthuizen and friends mentor SAGDB members at Africa Open**

The annual golf development clinic is one of the main activities of the Africa Open at East London Golf Club, setting the tone for an event that nurtures both champions and grassroots players.

Over the last two years, top international players have shared their knowledge, skills and love of the game with the next generation of young golfers who aspire to be champions themselves.

Ahead of this week's €1-million Sunshine and European Tour co-sanctioned tournament, six top professionals hosted a group of SAGDB learners on Wednesday.

Around 50 children between the ages of six and 18 from East London and King William's Town turned out for the clinic and received one-on-one instruction from Open champion Louis Oosthuizen, two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen, defending champion Charl Schwartzel, as well as Thomas Aiken, local favourite James Kamte and Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke.

"The courage and commitment from these children continues to encourage me," said Goosen. "They are truly inspirational and bear testament to the fact that with enough determination and willpower, anyone can live their dream."

"We feel privileged to share our time with the children; after all, these are our future champions," said Oosthuizen, who even brought the coveted Claret Jug along to share with the children.

"This is where our golf careers started; this is what inspired us to become the champions we are today and we are all duty-bound to give back to this game we love so much and help shape our future champions."

The learners also had a chance to question the players on how to excel at the game of golf and, of course, collect those all-important signatures.

"I learnt how to strike the ball correctly and how to practice properly," said 12-year-old Sinokhola Thumani, a grade seven learner at Bishop Primary School who recently joined the programme. He enjoyed the exercises he did with Clarke.

"He gave me a few tips that really made sense; now I just have to practice, practice and practice some more."

"It is so important in golf to get the basics right," said Schwartzel. "I have to say, I am very impressed by the standard of golf we saw today. They really have the basics down well."

Aiken added that as professionals, they are duty bound to give back to the game.

"As professional golfers we understand the value of golf development," he said. "These young golfers all hope to become champions and it's our duty to give back to the game in this way."

The Africa Open tees off from 6-9 January 2010 at East London Golf Club. Entry is free for children under 18 and pensioners. Adults have free entry on Thursday and Friday and tickets for the weekend cost R20 per person per day. There is also ample parking available, as well as public catering available.

Ends