

MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

Buffalo City
Municipality

Buffalo City to host world's top golfers for African Open

The Municipality is once again back into the swing of major sports with the Africa Open Golf Tournament, a highlight of the Sunshine Tour, kicking off the New Year from January 15 to 18.

It will be held at the East London Golf Course where some of the world's top golfers - including Richard Sterne, Argentinean Angel Cabrera, Ireland's Darren Clarke, and South Africa's Retief Goosen and James Kingston - will be competing for R5-million in prize money.

Keeping an eye on its 2010 ambitions, BCM is investing up to R3 million into the tournament and the spin offs are enormous especially for the locals.

BCM is positioning itself as a sport destination of choice towards ambitions of being a Team Base Camp and Training Venue for one of the teams that will be participating into the 2010 soccer World Cup competition.

A city by the sea, with rich in history, culture, knitted world class facilities and a home of sports champions, BCM has done it before having been a Host City for the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2003 Cricket World Cup.

The City – home to the Border Rugby Bulldogs, The Chevrolet Cricket Warriors, SA and World Boxing Champions – has been host to Premier Soccer League matches and team Bay United in 2008.

Over 300 direct jobs will be created during the four-day event with up to 144 golfers bringing boom towards local businesses, trade and tourism.

The City also expects the buzz of the tournament being in town will convince locals and influence them to have interest in the sport through awareness campaigns and various developmental programmes.

BCM Executive Mayor Sakhumzi Caga will tee off the first ball of the tournament signalling the beginning of great sporting events that the City will host including Iron Man South Africa.

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Grant Wilson, the Sunshine Tour's Chief Operating Officer, said the event has attracted golfers from the Sunshine Tour as well as a contingent of international names who will help add a keen edge to the fixture.

This is the second year the Africa Open has been held and, according to Wilson, the event is attracting a formidable field. Negotiations are well under way for the 2010 event to be co-sanctioned with the European Tour.

The Africa Open will be hosted at the East London Golf Club for the next three years, a course which offers a hilly and undulating challenge for the pro golfer and, with its breathtaking views, is an idyllic venue to host clients.

Wilson said: "With an increase of prize fund to R5 million, The Africa Open has become one of the most important events on our schedule. The Sunshine Tour is proud to be associated with Buffalo City and the Amathole region and we are excited about presenting a golf tournament of international stature at East London Golf Club in January."

Wilson expects that The Africa Open will become a major event on the South Africa Sunshine Tour and is confident that the increase in prize monies will also ensure that more and more top golfers will take part in the tournament in the future.

Buffalo City Municipality is sponsoring along with Sahara Computers, Amathole District Municipality, Emirates, PetroSA, Match Hospitality, Bonitas Medical Aid, Avis, Southern Sun, Algoa FM and Airbus.

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