

Press Release

Young disabled golfers' "papa" to compete in 2017 Canon South African Disabled Golf Open

Johannesburg, South Africa. February 2017 - Rushdi Sylvestor joins the field of talented local and international golfers confirmed to compete in the prestigious the 2017 Canon South African Disabled Golf Open taking place in Cape Town in May. Sylvestor, who is keenly involved with the South African Disabled Golf Association (SADGA) which organizes the annual tournament, has been playing amateur golf for seven years. In this short time, and despite his disability, he shines on the golf course. In 2015 and 2016, he came third in two divisions in the South African Disabled Golf Open; the Seniors Stableford and the Les Autres Division. He also ranked 9th overall in the Western Cape Order of Merit.

Rushdi, who was born with congenital hemiplegia, affecting his leg arm and leg, joined the SADGA office in 2014 as a volunteer. Helping out with administration and other jobs, the married father of three soon became interested in coaching disabled golfers. SADGA's head coach Andrew Corthing trained him to become a PGA Level 1 Coach and since January 2016 he has been successfully running six sessions per week at the Astra School for the Disabled in Montana for severely disabled Level 1 and 2 golfers. The ASTRA School has a modified golf environment where his young trainees enthusiastically lap up the skills and knowledge he has to offer. The children at the school fondly call him "papa Rushdi".

In addition to coaching the young players as part of SADGA's First Swing programme which teaches golf and other valuable life skills to disabled young golfers, 61 year old Rushdi is also "papa" to SADGA's Western Cape elite squad.

"This will be the 7th time that Rushdi will be participating in the South African Disabled Golf Open. A valued member of the SADGA family, he is also a very talented golfer and we are thrilled to have him representing SADGA at the tournament," says Reinard Schuhknecht, SADGA Brand Manager and reigning world one armed champion.

Hosted annually by SADGA, the South African Disabled Golf Open incorporates the world's top golfers with disabilities. In 2016, 30% of the field boasted single figure handicaps and more than half of the competitors have handicaps of 18 or lower.

The Canon South African Disabled Golf Open, will take place from the 15th to the 17th of May in Cape Town at the King David Mowbray Golf Course, which is the home of disabled golf in the Western Cape. Canon South Africa, which has been a proud sponsor of SADGA for many years, has proudly taken the reigns as the official sponsor of the South African Disabled Golf Open for 2017.

Canon SA's association with SADGA stems back to 2001 when the company sponsored a small prize for a golf tournament. Since then, its involvement with SADGA has continued to grow and blossom, with its sponsorship focusing on SADGA's First Swing initiative, a development programme for children with disabilities.

"We are excited to take our involvement with SADGA to the next level by sponsoring this year's South African Disabled Golf Open. We are inspired by Rushdi's commitment to SADGA and to the young golfers he coaches. We are thrilled to hear he will be competing in the tournament again this year," says Michelle Janse van Vuuren, Marketing Director at Canon SA.

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