

COLUMN

Time to Shine



Compleat Golfer's playing editor is Louis Oosthuizen and here he talks about the third Major of 2017 and his latest golf design project

As South Africans we have experienced a much longer drought between producing Major champions, but it's time we got our hands on another Major trophy.

The Open Championship at Royal Birkdale presents the next opportunity, followed by The PGA Championship, which is the fourth and final Major of the year.

Our last Major champion was Ernie Els, when he won his second Claret Jug, at the 2012 Open. That was actually the third year in a row a South African had won a Major, with Charl Schwartzel claiming the 2011 Masters and before that I won my first Major at the 2010 Open at St Andrews.

Trevor Immelman won the 2008 Masters before that and Retief Goosen won his

second US Open in 2004. Before then it was Ernie at the 2002 Open and Retief at the 2001 US Open, which just goes to show what a golden patch it was for South Africa.

Our biggest drought before then was the 16-year period between Gary Player's win at the 1978 Masters, which was his ninth career Major, and Ernie winning his first US Open in 1994.

So hopefully someone will be able to stick up their hand at Royal Birkdale, where South Africans have again qualified as a big group. Congratulations to all those who have earned the right to play at The Open, which is always such a special event.

The last time The Open was staged at Royal Birkdale was 2008, where Ernie performed

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the best of the South Africans, finishing in a tie for seventh behind Pádraig Harrington. I didn't compete there but Trevor finished inside the top 20, and Retief, Thomas Aiken and David Frost made the weekend cut.

Of course, you need an element of luck out on the course, and the weather always plays a part, along with the tee-off times. It's also important to keep double-bogeys off your card. You're going to hit a few

bad shots and get into trouble out there, but the trick is keeping the big numbers off your card and quickly putting a bad hole behind you.

In other news, I'm happy to say that I will be at the 2017 AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open at The Heritage Golf Club this November. My first professional victory came on a Peter Matkovich golf course. My passion for playing golf has led me to explore my passion for golf design and I am thrilled to

be co-designing this incredible second golf course at Heritage Resorts with Peter.

I am looking forward to working on the luxurious land of Bel Ombre and am excited about creating a golf course which perfectly balances the challenge of a championship layout with the element of fun that needs to be incorporated into any layout.

This year's tournament has grown to 156 golfers from over 30 countries, so there's plenty to look forward to. ☺

PUTTING SET-UP

The way you stand to the ball has a huge impact on your success rate on the greens. I have an alignment stick I use regularly in practice. This helps me check if the face of my putter is square to the target through impact. It is amazing how easy it is to let the important precision of this position slip, and laying down an alignment stick is effective. As you hit ball after ball, this visual aid will help you with alignment at address and through impact. In reading the line, the simple rule is that when the grass on your line looks shiny, it is downgrain and will run slightly faster. If the grass between your ball and the hole looks darker, you'll be putting into the grain so allow for a slightly slower roll. I have never putted with a glove because it's all about feel. I used to have my left hand low (cack-handed) but have gone back to the way I had it when I won The Open in 2010. I just feel more comfortable like that. The below sequence shows you how I set up my grip.

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