



IN HONOUR OF  
GARY PLAYER

# daily NEWS

ROUND 1 | THURSDAY 05-12-2024



Homa leads  
top field  
in chase for  
Nedbank Golf  
Challenge  
glory

The Gary Player Country Club course is ready to welcome 66 of the world's top professionals for today's first round of the Nedbank Golf Challenge, with defending champion Max Homa leading one of the strongest fields in recent history as they battle it out for glory in 'Africa's Major' at Sun City.

# A taste WORTH MORE



Homa, who last year became one of the few players in the history of the Nedbank Golf Challenge to win on debut, forms part of a strong field of DP World Tour, PGA Tour, Sunshine Tour, Ryder Cup, Presidents Cup and Olympic Games stars gathered for this year's tournament.

"I'm very excited to come back to Sun City to defend my title. Gary Player is a golfing legend, who has given so much to the game, so winning a tournament that he is associated with made it even more special," said Homa. The American is seeking to become the eighth player in the history of the tournament to successfully defend his title, and the first American to do so since Jim Furyk in 2005 and 2006.

The world number 35 is joined by fellow American Will Zalatoris as well as the Canadian duo of Corey Connors and Mackenzie Hughes.

This year's field includes just under half of the top 20 players on last season's DP World Tour Race to Dubai Rankings.

Thriston Lawrence, the world number 47, leads a strong local challenge that also features Christiaan Bezuidenhout, Erik van Rooyen, Dylan Frittelli, Ockie Strydom and Brandon Stone.

They are all seeking to become the first home winner of 'Africa's Major' since Branden Grace in 2017.

England's Danny Willett returns as the 2014 champion. This year's field also features a healthy contingent of players making their debut in this event.

South Africans Ryan van Velzen, Robin Williams and Aldrich Potgieter are all experiencing their first taste of a tournament they grew up watching, while China's 20-year-old star Wenyi Ding will also make his first appearance in the Nedbank Golf Challenge.

## 'You feel like you're next to the lions here'

Denmark's Nicolai Højgaard is hoping to go one better at this year's Nedbank Golf Challenge than his second place finish behind Max Homa last year.

Højgaard shared the lead after the first round last year, was two shots back going into the weekend, then trailed Homa by two shots ahead of the final round before finishing four shots adrift of the champion.

He's back this year determined to lift the famous crystal trophy.

"It's good to be back again. I've been looking forward to this week all year. It's good to be back at a place where you've played well before," said Højgaard.

The Dane has also fallen in love with Sun City and what this tournament offers.

"Sun City is pretty unique. You've got the game drives and you feel like you've got the wildlife right next to you here. It's pretty special. It's so far away from what I'm used to back home in Denmark.

"You know, on the game drive you take pictures of the animals, but also of the surroundings because it's so different to what we see back home in Denmark. Even though we travel all around the world, it's still so special here. We're not used to it. You feel like you're just next to the lions. You don't know if a leopard will come out of the bush. It's exciting and it's what makes this place so unique. I love coming here."



THE NEW

# X3

# Gary Player dreams of an even bigger future for 'Africa's Major'

As has become tradition at 'Africa's Major', Gary Player will take up his seat on the first tee box today and personally welcome the professionals who are challenging for glory in the tournament played in his honour.

For South Africa's greatest sportsman, it will be another moment to savour in a tournament he helped to launch, and at a Sun City resort that he was privileged to witness the birth of. "What makes this tournament so special for me is the fact that all those years ago I wasn't just part of the beginning of an iconic golf tournament. I stood on the site of something truly special as Sol Kerzner talked me through his entire vision for Sun City, of which the Gary Player Country Club was a part, and then later the Nedbank Golf Challenge became one of the main vehicles to take this magnificent vision to the world. When you look at this resort today, which to me is the best resort in the world, it's incredible to think that I stood amongst the veld and bushes when there was nothing here" says Player. But even as he prepares for this year's tournament, Player is already

thinking to the future. "The Nedbank Golf Challenge has always stayed at the forefront of the evolution of the game. We've continued to make changes to the Gary Player Country Club course, and this year fans will notice we've removed the bunker from the right of the fairway on 18 to encourage the pros to be a bit more aggressive. But I have other ideas for the next few years which I'm discussing with Sun International. Changes to 17 and 18, while I'm also looking at pushing the tee back on the eighth hole, and building another eight tee boxes throughout the course." Similarly, Player has ideas about the future of the Nedbank Golf Challenge as well. "I think we have a wonderful field this year. I'm delighted that Max is back to defend his title. It's always special when the defending champion returns. We've got a strong contingent of South Africans



and we have a number of exciting young players making their debut. However I would still like to see more of the PGA Tour's stars come and experience this incredible tournament and our beautiful country. I think a world where this event is supported by both the best from the DP World Tour and PGA Tour would be a major step forward for 'Africa's Major'."



And follow us on social media

Download the official Sunshine Tour app for the latest news, schedules, player profiles, stats, highlights & live leaderboards. [www.sunshinetour.com](http://www.sunshinetour.com) #GreatnessBeginsHere





EXPERIENCE  
**SUMMER**  
UNDER THE SUN  
AT ONE OF OUR WORD-CLASS  
DESTINATIONS

Enjoy the energy of summer  
with experiences designed  
to delight and captivate.

**BOOK NOW!**

Experience *Sum* International

# Bezuidenhout 'hungry' to compete again



**C**hristiaan Bezuidenhout is back at a Gary Player Country Club where he won the South African Open in 2020, and admits he's hungry to add a victory in the Nedbank Golf Challenge to his list of achievements on a course he dearly loves.

"I've always liked this golf course. You have to drive it straight here, which is a strong part of my game. I have fond memories here, so hopefully I can tick the box with the Nedbank Golf Challenge this week," he said.

Armed with those good memories, Bezuidenhout also comes into this week feeling refreshed after a six-week break from all golf and quality time spent with his family.

"It's been a long year, but a good year over in America. I needed the rest, but I feel hungry to compete again. It's nice to be out here with the guys again and I'm looking forward to the week."

Bezuidenhout returns to Sun City with a top finish of tied fifth in the 2022 Nedbank Golf Challenge.

"This has always been a highlight for me. I remember coming here for the first time in 2003 as an eight-year-old boy. I always dreamt of playing in the Nedbank Golf Challenge, so it's always a privilege to come back here now as a player."

Sunbet  
.co.za

**SWING  
INTO  
ACTION**  
& Bet On The **Nedbank  
Golf Challenge**

**BET NOW**

Sunbet.co.za is regulated and licensed by the Western Cape Racing and Gambling Board, Mpumalanga Economic Regulator and the North West Gambling Board. No persons under the age of 18 years are permitted to gamble. Winners know when to stop. South African Responsible Gambling Foundation toll free counselling line 0800 006 008 or WhatsApp "help" to 076 675 0710.

**FORTINET**

Fortify Your  
Cybersecurity

[fortinet.com](https://fortinet.com)



# DRAW FOR ROUND 1 - THURSDAY

Game	Time	Tee	Name	Country	Attachment
1	09:21	1	Dylan FRITTELLI	RSA	UT GC
			Bernd WIESBERGER	AUT	
			Pablo LARRAZÁBAL	ESP	Real Club de Golf el Prat
2	09:32	1	Julien GUERRIER	FRA	Golf de la prée La Rochelle
			Robin WILLIAMS	RSA	Peterborough Milton GC
			Angel HIDALGO	ESP	RCG Las Brisas
3	09:43	1	Aldrich POTGIETER	RSA	Pinnacle Point Golf Estate
			Romain LANGASQUE	FRA	GC De Cannes Mougins
			Laurie CANTER	ENG	Cumberwell Park GC
4	09:54	1	Elvis SMYLIÉ	AUS	Southport GC
			Jordan SMITH	ENG	Bowood
			Guido MIGLIOZZI	ITA	
5	10:05	1	Jorge CAMPILLO	ESP	Norba Club de Golf de Caceres
			Sebastian SÖDERBERG	SWE	Black Mountain GC
			Ewen FERGUSON	SCO	Bearsden GC
6	10:16	1	Jesper SVENSSON	SWE	Upsala GC
			Wenyi DING	CHN	
			Thomas DETRY	BEL	Royal GC of Belgium
7	10:27	1	Ryan VAN VELZEN	RSA	Benoni CC
			Niklas NORGAARD	DEN	Kokkedal GC
			Matteo MANASSERO	ITA	Gardagolf CC
8	10:38	1	Will ZALATORIS	USA	Dallas National GC
			Tom MCKIBBIN	NIR	Galgorm
			Erik VAN ROOYEN	RSA	
9	10:49	1	Danny WILLETT	ENG	The Belfry H&R
			Mackenzie HUGHES	CAN	
			Thorbjørn OLESEN	DEN	
10	11:00	1	Corey CONNERS	CAN	The Bears Club
			Christiaan BEZUIDENHOUT	RSA	Serengeti Wildlife & Golf Estate
			Paul WARING	ENG	Jumeirah Golf Estates
11	11:11	1	Max HOMA	USA	
			Thriston LAWRENCE	RSA	Pretoria CC
			Nicolai HØJGAARD	DEN	

Game	Time	Tee	Name	Country	Attachment
12	09:21	10	Ockie STRYDOM	RSA	South Africa
			Jordan GUMBERG	USA	Adios GC
			Ryggs JOHNSTON	USA	Cabinet View GC
13	09:32	10	Dan BRADBURY	ENG	Wakefield GC
			David RAVETTO	FRA	RCF la Boulie
			Frederic LACROIX	FRA	RCF La Boulie
14	09:43	10	Marcel SIEM	GER	Heritage Mauritius
			Andy SULLIVAN	ENG	Stratford-on-Avon GC
			Nacho ELVIRA	ESP	
15	09:54	10	Ugo COUSSAUD	FRA	Golf de Arcangues
			Sam BAIRSTOW	ENG	Club de Golf Alcanada
			Alex FITZPATRICK	ENG	Hollinwell GC
16	10:05	10	Joe DEAN	ENG	College Pines GC
			Johannes VEERMAN	USA	Winston Golf
			Matthew JORDAN	ENG	Royal Liverpool GC
17	10:16	10	Brandon STONE	RSA	Durban CC
			Daniel HILLIER	NZL	Royal Wellington
			Aaron COCKERILL	CAN	The Els Club Dubai
18	10:27	10	Daniel GAVINS	ENG	Howley Hall GC
			Adrian OTAEGUI	UAE	Golburu Golf
			Todd CLEMENTS	ENG	
19	10:38	10	Calum HILL	SCO	Gleneagles Hotel
			Yuto KATSURAGAWA	JPN	
			Grant FORREST	SCO	The Renaissance Club
20	10:49	10	Sami VÄLIMÄKI	FIN	Nokia River Golf
			Daniel BROWN	ENG	Romanby GC
			Simon FORSSTRÖM	SWE	Gamebook
21	11:00	10	Ryo HISATSUNE	JPN	SBS Holdings
			Darius VAN DRIEL	NED	The Outpost Club
			Connor SYME	SCO	Drumoig Golf Centre
22	11:11	10	Francesco LAPORTA	ITA	San Domenico Golf
			Dale WHITNELL	ENG	Crondon Park
			Alexander BJÖRK	SWE	Vaxjo GK



Your Private  
Banking Card  
is now your Golf  
Membership Card.