

Taking it easy in the fast lane

Being a good golfer is like managing a business; being a great golfer is about being an entrepreneur. Both drive from the front, work hard and take responsibility for their decisions. The difference is that the entrepreneur is also prepared to take great risks.



Many books use sport as a metaphor for business. There's an equal amount written about sport as a business. But unless you've experienced both, the message is often lost. The best way to learn, whether you are a manager or an entrepreneur, is by getting out on your "course" and doing what needs to be done. That's where you get to meet others and get a measure of yourself.

Since 2004, this has been happening on South Africa's top golf courses at the Vodacom Business Origins of Golf. This annual event comprises of a series of professional golf tournaments where amateur golfers are invited to play with a group of professional golfers.

Steven Haywood, executive director of Vodacom Business South Africa says "The Vodacom Business Origins of Golf Tour is the ultimate golf experience. Vodacom is a world-class converged communications provider. Our "network" is not simply about configuring technological compatibility. It is about the connectivity of people, of being able to connect a group of passionate, empowered people taking risks pursuing a tough challenge and gaining invaluable knowledge by participating in the ultimate golf experience."

Haywood adds: "We are proud to have created the ultimate platform for South African golfers to help launch them on their international professional careers."

The Big Easy inspires... The Big Easy

Every year the series has adopted a theme, and this year, in honour of golfing legend and icon, Ernie "The Big Easy" Els, the theme is "Vodacom Origins goes Easy". The 2010 series teed off at the Gardener Ross Golf Estate, an Ernie Els signature golf course, and will end with the sixth and final tournament at Oubaai, the first Ernie Els signature course in the country. Naming this year's Vodacom Business Origins after "The Big Easy" is a fitting tribute to a man who is a triple Major Champion, former world number one and seven-time World Match Play champion.

Els joins a legendary pantheon of golfing greats in being the focus of this year's Business Origins of Golf, players such as Ben Hogan and Gary Player. And if anyone knows one or two secrets of being a great golfer, it has to be Ernie Els. Behind that big smile and the boyish eyes, lies the knowledge that on any given day, the game is really about challenging yourself.



Easy does it – and with who else but Els?

Not only does Business Origins of Golf provide a chance to witness some of South Africa's best golfers in action, it gives golf enthusiasts the opportunity to pit their own skills against the best in the business. And, true to its name, it provides a fertile ground for the exchange of ideas and discussions that invariably help develop future business solutions. There is no measure for the value of quality time spent with fellow business colleagues in the hospitable environment of the tournament.

Vodacom Business Origins of Golf are active members of the greater community that they work in and like any gathering of driven individuals, the participants in the tournament want to ensure that others benefit from their involvement. Last year, the 2009 Vodacom Business Origins of Golf Tour launched its Birdies for Kiddies campaign. For every birdie made by a professional over the course of the entire tournament, Vodacom Foundation donated R500 to a children's charity. That year they raised more than R3 million. All beneficiaries are selected and approved by the Vodacom Foundation.

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