



MORE SOUTH AFRICANS QUALIFY FOR NEDBANK GOLF CHALLENGE

The top two golfers on the Sunshine Tour Order of Merit have qualified for the upcoming Nedbank Golf Challenge as the final field for the \$6.5-million tournament nears completion.

According to the expanded eligibility criteria for the tournament, the first- and second-ranked players on the Tour's Order of Merit as of Monday 25 November are guaranteed a place in the 30-man field at the Gary Player Country Club from 5-8 December.

This means a debut in the event for South Africans Darren Fichardt and Dawie van der Walt.

Fichardt is currently top of the local Order of Merit with R4 445 805 in earnings, followed by Van Der Walt on R2 831 592.50.

Fichardt secured his place in the field with a season that featured a victory in the Africa Open and second in the Tshwane Open, both of which are co-sanctioned by the European Tour. Van Der Walt's second-place on the Order of Merit has been built largely around his victory in the Tshwane Open earlier this year.

This makes for a total of seven South Africans currently in the field for "Africa's Major", including Ernie Els, Branden Grace, Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen, Richard Sterne, Fichardt and Van Der Walt.

The winner of this week's Alfred Dunhill Championship at Leopard Creek will also qualify for the Nedbank Golf Challenge.

"Our new eligibility criteria has created more opportunities for the Sunshine Tour players to qualify. It's an incredible reward for them at the end of the season and is a real investment in South African golf because it shows the value of competing in South Africa," said Alastair Roper, the Tournament Director for Sun International's Nedbank Golf Challenge.

"This is amongst the greatest number of South African players we have ever had in our field, which not only shows the depth of our golf but also a commitment to the development of the South African game."