

ProAm prize giving dinner

12 January 2011

Address by the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg on the occasion of the ProAm prize giving dinner at the Royal Johannesburg Kensington and Golf Club, Kensington, Johannesburg

Programme Director

Mr Andrew Mlangeni, Member of Parliament

General Jabu Shoke, Chief of the Army of the SANDF

Ms Lindiwe Maseko, Speaker of the Gauteng Legislature

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Members from the Provincial Legislature

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mavela Dlamini

Commissioner of the Sunshine Tour: Mr. Gareth Tindell

Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club CEO: Mr Gary Marais

Representatives of B-Wired

Golf Development Coaches – Peter Shibambo and Obed Matlou

All our sponsors and partners

Managers and Officials of Council

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening. It is indeed a great honour and pleasure to welcome all of you to this prestigious event (in the city's calendar) - the 2011 Joburg Open ProAm prize giving dinner. Perhaps Programme Director, it is appropriate, given our African tradition and hospitality, to extend a special welcome to all our international guests. I know that Darren Clarke objects to being referred to as a veteran...and rather prefers to be referred to as a young veteran...Welcome!

Programme Director, in November 2010, South Africa was named "Africa, Indian Ocean and Gulf States Golf Destination of the Year 2011" by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (AIGTO). This announcement was made in Valencia, Spain, at the annual International Awards Ceremony for the golf tourism industry. This is a significant acknowledgement that golfers of all abilities across the world, as well as one of the most diversely appealing destinations on the planet."

Programme Director, the selection for winning golf destinations is made through votes cast by over 300 golf tour operators from 50 countries who consider the following:

- Customer satisfaction
- Quality golf courses and accommodation
- Value for money
- Support from suppliers
- Tourist boards and air lines
- Professional conduct of suppliers; and
- Accessibility to tee times.

We have indeed come a long way... from humble beginnings at its conception in 2007 to

where we are today, we can proudly say that Joburg has set the trend to change the face of golf forever.

So tonight's event marks yet another key milestone in the story of the evolution of golf in the City of Johannesburg.

There may be a sense that the country is over communicating its success on the 2010 FIFA Soccer World cup. The fact however is that, given the fact that the World Cup is the biggest sporting event in the world and the skepticism that was sometimes thrown in as the spanner in the works, we do need to provide a context to our ability to host major events. We do need to remind ourselves that Joburg played no small a role in hosting the opening ceremony and the first match, in staging 15 matches out of 32, providing for and transporting in excess of 1-million spectators, provided great music and related cultural activities, the hosting of the finals and the closing ceremony with all the pomp and splendor, not forgetting the dancing African elephants, the spectacular fireworks displays and much much more.

The successful hosting of the World Cup in 2010 and the Joburg Open since 2007, has continued to positively position the city, the province and the country as a sporting destination of choice.

What about golfing development?

The decision to leverage golf sporting development through the Joburg Open, speaks volumes about what is possible. For those who were at the driving range yesterday, at a place that the residents of Alex popularly refer to as Mjerry, would agree that definite progress is being made. This ongoing Golf Development Clinic sees professionals sharing their skills with budding young golfers.

Yesterday saw scores of children between the ages of 10 to 21 years, from schools in the Greater Alexandra area, practice their golf at the driving range under the leadership and watchful eye of local and international golfing greats.

This year we offered the opportunity to amongst others, Sipho Sithole, Jonathan Raphunga and Yuben Jung to demonstrate their skills and learn from professional golfers. Our technical team was greatly impressed by the potential of these young golfers.

We need to see this extended to other areas, including Ivory Park, Orange Farm and Soweto.

On life skills, golf is not just about putting and greens. It is also about developing core life skills such as self awareness, self discipline, a high self esteem, a positive and optimistic outlook and personal integrity.

Given the recession, and the complex competing needs, is it correct to spend money on golf or any other sport?

Perhaps it is important to start off by stating the point that government is about the well being of people ... it is about service ... it is about a people centred approach. The question we should pose to ourselves is: how do we ensure that the country benefits optimally from the fact that the Joburg Open attracts so many international players and guests?

It is important to indicate that development is not just about housing or roads, development also includes sports and other related activities. Overall, it is always important to balance the competing needs in a way that ensures that the bias to address the needs of the poorest of the poor is not lost sight of.

Recently, in the throes of the harsh economic recession, we have had to reflect on the value-add of this event to our city. The simple facts are as follows:

- More than 315 million homes and television viewers across the world watched the Joburg Open live in each of the previous four years.
- According to the official European Tour project report prepared by Global Media Valuations, the Joburg Open 2009 produced a total global media value of £21,147,962 (over R250million).
- Of this figure, and title sponsor 'Joburg' received £11,516,698 (nearly R140million). This equates to 54% of the total global media value.

This type of return on investment is not a common experience in international events and to us. It firmly confirms the enormity of benefits to our city and country as a truly international destination. Some economic experts also advise that the most successful cities tend to be the ones that focus on the bigger picture, especially in a recessionary environment because when the recession is over, as it always will, those cities are found to be ten steps ahead of everybody.

In a short space of five years, the Joburg Open has become a firm favourite on the global golfing calendar and this year's tournament will again provide the spectators with opportunities to see both top-ranked and exciting new talent in action and setting the pace for the rest of the year. For us, it is the perfect platform to profile the city.

Programme Director, we are mindful of the fact that this is the fifth year that we are hosting this event. In particular, we are pleased that most of our past champions Ariel Canete (2007), Richard Sterne (2008), Anders Hansen (2009) and of course the defending Champion Charl Schwartzel (2010), are on the field of play.

In the City of Johannesburg we will always feel, rightly or wrongly, that all the golfers, especially the international players and champions, are forever the sons of Joburg. We are therefore looking forward to them becoming important and good ambassadors for this city, our province and indeed our country.

On a personal note Programme Director, I have been privileged to see this tournament conceptualized, develop and finally blossom to such a big event. As this political term of office comes to an end, we are proud that our executive political leadership, the executive administrative leadership, all our partners and role players have collectively left an indelible mark in laying a firm foundation for the further development of golf and this tournament.

Our thanks also goes to all the players, organizers of the tournament, sponsors and the patrons that will come and watch the "Battle of 2011".

Programme Director, for us to plan properly we are pleased that the hosting rights for this event are now held directly by the City of Johannesburg. This places us amongst a few municipalities in the World that have hosting rights in this way. In fact the Sunshine Tour

led by its Board of Directors and the Commissioner, Gareth Tindall must be commended for their foresightedness in that the public sector has as much a role to play as would be the private companies. We feel vindicated by the value-add that each of our partners has realized from their association with this tournament.

We are also very proud to be hosted by the Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf club yet again as a true gesture of our positive experience when ever we visit this place. Thank you Gary (Marais) and your team. I am confident that the participants will indeed feel your hospitality and the splendour of the fairways that you worked so hard to prepare, the excellent upgrade of the clubhouse and all its services in our World Class African City, Joburg.

I thank all those that were with us throughout this expedition and those that took time to help me personally to hit the ball fairer, straighter and not so far into the rough. We thank our sponsors past and present and say to you "Your contribution is greatly appreciated by the city of Johannesburg".

Now the tee-box and the Greens are calling and we hope tomorrow morning will mark the true spirit of a championship battle, fierce but fair competition from all the players - for one player to emerge on Sunday afternoon as the 2011 Joburg Open Champion.

Good luck to all the players and may the best player win!

Thank you one and all; and enjoy the evening.