

South African Blind Golf Association (SABGA)

SA Open – 2012

Slattery retains SA title with Kotze taking net award

December 2012 saw the return of SA's top visually-impaired golfers to the Zwartkop Golf Club to compete for the SA title over 36 holes of stroke play.

Despite several withdrawals in the week prior to the event (including Ernst Conradie who won the SADGA's net trophy for visually-impaired golfers at Langebaan earlier in the year), the field included the three SA golfers who have Protea Colours, namely Garrett Slattery (the defending champion), Leon Strydom (last year's net winner) and Johan Kotze (the 2009 champion).

Conditions were challenging, what with the summer heat of Pretoria and the rough which had grown owing to recent rains. Nevertheless, the first day saw strong foundations being built for the eventual winners.

Garrett Slattery led the way after the first day by 8 strokes, with Johan Kotze leading the race for the net trophy with an impressive 39 stableford points (one ahead of Garrett). Johan achieved this with an outstanding 23 points on the back 9 (which included one blackout). Manie Blom edged ahead of Leon Strydom into third place after the first day.

Neither Slattery nor Kotze could match their opening day's performances on the second day and, despite an improvement on the second day for Blom, he could not make up any ground on the leaders.. The final results were as follows:

Gross Champion: Garrett Slattery – 195
Runner-up: Johan Kotze – 204

Net Winner: Johan Kotze
Runner-up: Garrett Slattery
Third: Manie Blom

This was Manie's first event for the visually-impaired making his performance that much more impressive. He made full use of the experience of his guide Swannie (a former scratch golfer himself). Garrett was guided by his son Brendon, who has now guided Garrett to two SA titles, as well as his recent runner-up position in the International Blind Golf Association's World Championships (in Nova Scotia, Canada).

The SABGA would like to thank the ever-enthusiastic Lily Reich and the Board of SADGA for their support in this event, as well as Jody Schultz (who was present to take some pictures for the SADGA website). Thanks also go to the Zwartkop Golf Club who once again made the players feel very welcome.