

South African Blind Golf Association (SABGA)

ISPS Handa SA Open – 2014

November 2014 saw SA's top visually-impaired golfers gathering at the Stellenbosch Golf Club to compete for the SA title over 36 holes of stroke play.

The field included the three SA golfers who have Protea Colours, namely Garrett Slattery (the defending gross champion, and current International Blind Golf B2 World Champion), Leon Strydom (the defending stableford champion) and Johan Kotze (the 2012 stableford winner). Ernst Conradie (who performed well in the 2013 British Blind Open) as well as the up and coming Manie Blom and Morne Els made up the local contingent. The competition was boosted by the presence of top Irish golfer Wally Roode, playing in his first SA Open event.



Stellenbosch Golf Club

The Stellenbosch golf course proved to be a stern, but fair, challenge for the golfers. The temperature, which crossed 30C on both days, was moderated slightly with a little wind. The course was in immaculate condition, which made good scoring very possible.

The first day saw Garrett take an early lead with a very good gross 89 (40 points). With Ernst (35 points), Wally (32 points), and Johan (30 points) keeping themselves firmly in the chase for the title.

The second day saw some of the players who struggled on the first day coming good. Leon had a superb gross 100 (41 points), Manie put together a very sound 30 points, and Morne became one of the 3 players to break 100, with a very credible gross 98. Wally made a great move to challenge Garrett, putting together a gross 95 (38 points), but with a round of 97 (33 points) Garrett held off the spirited challenge.



Net prize-winners (from left to right): Garrett (1st), Wally (2nd) & Leon (3rd)

The gross competition was divided into the sight categories B3 (for players with a visual acuity of below 10%) and B2 (for players with a visual acuity of below 5%). This is in line with international practice, and is done in recognition of the fact that as eyesight reduces to very low levels the game becomes increasingly challenging.



B2 Champion 0 Garrett

B3 Champion - Wally

The final results were as follows:

B2 Gross Champion:	Garrett Slattery – 186
B2 Gross Runner-up:	Johan Kotze – 222
B3 Gross Champion:	Wally Roode – 196
B3 Runner-up:	Morne Els – 207
Net (stableford) winner:	Garrett Slattery – 73 points
Net (stableford) runner-up:	Wally Roode – 70 points
Net (stableford) 3 rd place:	Leon Strydom – 67 points
Net (stableford) 4 th place:	Ernst Conradie
Net (stableford) 5 th place:	Johan Kotze

Thanks to:

The SA Blind Golf Association would like to express our sincere thanks to all of those people and organisations who made this event possible.

In particular to our main sponsors: The International Blind Golf Association, The Western Cape Government, Avroy Shlain, Protea Hotel (Techno Park), Nashua Communications, Woolf's Trophies and, last but by no means least, Nic at The Pixel Revelation (a local Stellenbosch company) for all of his help with photography and banners. Thanks very much for your support, it is much appreciated.

Thanks too to the Stellenbosch Golf Club, and the fantastic team from management, the pro shop, catering, waiters and the invaluable caddies. We were made to feel so welcome throughout that we will just have to come back again.

What's Next?

The SA Blind Golf Association is hoping to be able to raise the funds necessary to send a team to participate in the next International Blind Golf World Championships, to be staged in Japan in 2016. We have a proud history in this biennial event, which is the pinnacle of the blind golf calendar, since our first participation in 2008.