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A full swing at a better life for golfing duo

Logan Green

When the second public school term commences on Tuesday, April 18 at H B Nyathi Secondary School in Daveyton, two of the school's learners will not be there.

Instead, talented golfers Bandile Mokoena (15) and Senzo Funeka (13) will begin a new journey after receiving scholarships from the Ekurhuleni metro's Sport, Heritage, Recreation, Arts and Culture (SHRAC) Department to attend the TuksSport High School, an independent co-ed school catering for learners from Grade Eight to 12.

The school forms part of the High Performance Centre (HPC) at the University of Pretoria, and shares its vision of offering a unique sporting and learning environment to its learners.

The Daveyton duo, who got into the game just two years ago at Daveyton Golf Club, have benefited from the Benoni Country Club's (BCC) transformation and development strategy, which has seen them receive membership at BCC and tutelage from Loyiso



Bandile Mokoena (left), Agatha Mahlase (principal of H B Nyathi Secondary School), Gerald Motlhaping (deputy principal) and Loyiso Barnes (development coach at the South African Golf Development Board).

Barnes, a development coach from the South African Golf Development Board (SAGDB).

Barnes, who started as a caddy at BCC, has been an administrator within the Ekurhuleni Golf Union (EGU) for 11 years and has, as a mentor to young golfers, been a

passionate driving force in growing the game in the region.

In the last two years he has been involved with the SAGDB and has seen great strides being made by his mentees.

Both of his golfers played in the Pro-Am at the recent South African

Open at Glendower Golf Course and both have won Ekurhuleni tournaments.

"The Ekurhuleni metro and SHRAC looked at the work we are doing and came on board with the scholarships, derived from the metro's South African Open Legacy

Projects," said Barnes.

"It is great for the game and for the children.

"It takes them off the streets and keeps them away from social ills in our community.

"To me, golf is the greatest game that humankind has ever played and for them to get this opportunity is a great honour and privilege."

According to Barnes, although it is hoped that the boys will benefit tremendously from the golf-specific performance programmes at the school, their academic performances will be priority number one.

Agatha Mahlase, principal of H B Nyathi Secondary School, said that the school is extremely excited for their now former learners.

"We know that they will represent our school well," she said.

Barnes thanked Atwell Sijadu (the metro's sports director), Boycie Ntlwane (the manager of the metro's sports academy) and Thabo Mokeba (the manager of the metro's sports facilities operations) for making a "once in a lifetime opportunity" available to the boys.

