

# NMMU out to defend USSA title

## Madibaz manager wary of Highveld conditions despite experienced team

**N**MMU will be sending a potent four-man team to defend their title when the University Sport South Africa golf tournament is played at the Centurion Country Club in Gauteng next week.

The KPMG Madibaz team dominated last year's event at Humewood in Port Elizabeth, winning the A and B sections, while Luke Jerling was crowned the individual champion.

Jerling has since turned professional but club manager Karl du Preez feels they have a good chance of retaining the title, even though there will be some pressure on them as the holders.

"There will obviously be the challenge to perform as well as last year and a contributing factor is we are playing inland," he said.

"It is often perceived that coastal teams are better players at coastal courses."

However, he felt they would still be among the title contenders, with two capable newcomers in Kyle de Beer and Altin van der Merwe.

"We are only sending one four-man team this year and two of them, Jacques Smith and Hando Brophy, are very experienced at playing USSA tournaments."

"The rookies [De Beer and Van der Merwe] have extensive experience playing national tournaments and will have major roles to play in assuring success."

He pointed out that all four had been cho-

sen for the USSA national team which competed in the SA Challenge Cup in the Western Cape in May, while De Beer had also been selected to represent South Africa at the 29th Summer Universiade in Taipei in August.

"In my opinion, we have a strong side, which, I think, will be very competitive."

Du Preez said the USSA tournament was a major goal for the club and that they had put in extensive preparations for the event.

"The success of the USSA team acts as a major drawcard for potential students to join the varsity so this makes it an important event for us."

He said the students had played in most of the Eastern Province Golf Union and NMMU Order of Merit events this year and had attended many practice sessions at the Humewood Golf Club.

Du Preez said the biggest challenge would be adapting to the conditions when they teed off early in the Highveld weather.

"The greens will be quick and there will be no wind, but a big factor is that it is winter and our students will have to adapt to the morning near-freezing temperatures."

"I believe one of the toughest competitors will be University of Pretoria, who should be the favourites, looking at their past performances," he said.

Madibaz beat Pretoria in the final last year, but Du Preez said the Gauteng team's knowledge of the conditions could be an important factor.



**NATIONAL EXPERIENCE:** KPMG Madibaz Golf Club star Kyle de Beer will play in his first University Sport South Africa tournament at Centurion Country Club, starting on Monday