



AMATEUR NEWS

Science student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth – was thrilled with his international debut.

"It was absolutely the highlight of my life to compete in an event of such magnitude," said the 19-year-old Eastern Province golfer. "To walk among 7,000 athletes in Taipei representing your country was a life-changing experience."

"I was definitely nervous when we arrived in Taipei, but by the time we had our practice day and the two official practice rounds, I was properly relaxed," he said.

"The course was in amazing condition. It wasn't overly tight or long, but it was very well-bunkered and there was a lot of water trouble. The greens were firm and ran smoothly, but not too fast, but for me the rough was the real challenge."

"I don't have much experience with Bermuda grass, so I had a bit of trouble adjusting to it. If you caught a flier out of the rough, the ball flew a good 40 metres further than what we are used to. The weather was also tricky; nothing quite prepared me for the heat and humidity."

De Beer said the key to scoring well at the Trent Jones Junior layout was accuracy off the tees.

"You could definitely score well if you kept the ball in play, but anything off the fairway was severely punished," he said. "All three of us had at least one good scoring day where we struck the ball well and a day where things just didn't go to plan."

"Overall I played nicely and improved through the tournament. I actually got to five under through 16 holes in the final round, but the fatigue set in and I played the last two holes as if I was brain-dead."

Rather than dwell on the bogey-bogey finish to his campaign, De Beer prefers to focus on the positives from the experience.

"I learned some important lessons from this trip to Taiwan," he said. "It's really vital to access the conditions before a championship of this nature, because it directly impacts on your course management."

"The set up for events like these is a lot tougher than normal, so you have to start the holes well if you hope to score. If you don't keep it in play, you're always struggling to save par. But it's great to know that even if I didn't play my best golf, I still finished in the top 20, so I am not too far off from the best players at this level."

De Beer, who earned his spot on the USSA team via the South African Golf Association rankings, said the overall experience was much more than just playing in a golf championship.

"It was really fantastic to support the other South Africans and to see so many sports in one place and we even saw Justine Palframan win silver in the athletics," he said.

"We were accommodated in flats built for the Summer Universiade, with the USSA team spread out over a couple of floors and the Swedes on top. Everyone had their own bedroom with communal living spaces and every room had air-conditioning, which was a life-saver."

"It was great fun to meet up with everyone in the canteen for meals. The selection was massive and the choices almost overwhelming. The best part of the week was this incredible atmosphere of walking among champions from all corners of the world."

"I am very grateful for the guidance of Johan Steyn and Emile Steinmann from HPC Tuks Golf Academy who travelled with us as our manager and coach and a big thanks to Clayton and Dylan for their support during the whole week. It was honestly a life-changing experience and now more than ever, I am encouraged to earn my national colours to represent South Africa again and again."

