**Tuks line up in USSA Championship title defence**

PORT SHEPSTONE, 29 June 2015 - The University of Pretoria start their hunt for a 10th USSA (University Sport South Africa) Championships title at Port Shepstone Golf Club on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal on Monday.

Tuks celebrated back-to-back success at Koro Creek Golf Estate in Limpopo last year, claiming their fifth championship title in the prestigious annual championship since 2008 in spectacular fashion.

Tuks A players Marco Loubser, Andrew van der Knaap, Stephen Morrison and rookie Reinardt Blaauw stole the march on North West University (NWU) in the final knockout match when they handed Pukke a 5-1 drubbing in the Singles to seal their title defence.

Tuks B claimed a runner-up finish and the defending champions have once again covered their bets with two teams as they target a hat-trick of titles in this year’s competition.

Loubser, Morrison and Blaauw return for duty alongside Ryan Lane, who played for the B-Team in 2014, while David Nortje and Zabastian de Jager from the 2014 B-Team also return alongside rookies Andrew Plint and Tristan Kempenaar.

A total of 22 teams representing higher education institutions across South Africa, as well as the University of Zululand will challenge for glory in Port Shepstone over the next four days.

The Inter-Institutional Match Play Championship on Wednesday and Thursday will be contested over four divisions of eight teams each.

The seeding for the four divisions is decided in a 36-hole Inter-Institutional Stroke Play Championship on Monday and Tuesday, with the top eight teams qualifying for the A-Division.

NWU, the University of Cape Town (UCT), Varsity College (VC), the University of Johannesburg (UJ), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the University of Stellenbosch (Maties), Rhodes University (Rhodes) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) are also fielding two teams each, while North West University Vaal, Centurion Academy, Central University of Technology (Free State), the University of Zululand and debutants University of Limpopo complete the line-up.

Tournament director Emile Steinman expects four days of intense competition.

“The USSA Championship is always a very closely fought battle and the Port Shepstone golf course is definitely primed to produce inspiring feats, rousing shot-making and a contest to savour,” Steinman said.

“Although the area has just come through a dry spell, the course is in very good condition. The fairways are firm and the greens are rolling true and fairly quick.

“Tuks are fielding two strong teams in their title defence, but NWU-Pukke are primed to take their revenge. We also woke up to a stiff breeze ahead of today’s first round, which definitely ups the ‘tricky’ factor of this layout.

“With more wind forecast for the area in the week, the defending champions could also come under heavy fire from the likes of Maties, UCT and NMMU, who regularly compete in windy coastal conditions.

“We have to express our gratitude to the staff and green staff at Port Shepstone Golf Club, who have done everything possible to present us with a fantastic course and are looking after us brilliantly.

“We also extend our appreciation to Sportweni for their assistance in setting up for the event and for arranging superb accommodation for the players, managers and officials at Kapenta Bay.”

Ends

PHOTO: Reinard Blaauw from the University of Pretoria in action in the first round of the USSA Championship Teams Stroke Play Qualifier at Port Shepstone Golf Club; credit Emile Steinmann.

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