

# Africa Amateur Championship

## Quick Quotes

Monday, 19 February 2024

## Adel Balala



R&A  
AFRICA AMATEUR  
CHAMPIONSHIP

### Q. When do you first remember starting playing golf?

ADEL BALALA: I started playing golf at about two years old. My father introduced me to it. I fell in love with it when I started playing competitive internationally.

### Q. Tell us about golf in your country where you're from.

ADEL BALALA: Golf in my country is very demystified, which is Kenya. We have a few good players, and we have a few legendary players, as well, some of which have competed on the DP World Tour and the Challenge Tour back in the day. We're working towards with the R&A to demystify golf across the country.

### Q. Explain the importance of the Africa Amateur. How special is this tournament going to be for you?

ADEL BALALA: Very special for me because we've had the Asia-Pacific; they have the Amateur. We've never had the African Amateur. It's lovely to have R&A in the picture because for countries like Kenya, we look at R&A like our fathers of golf.

### Q. Why do you love golf? What is it about the game that you love?

ADEL BALALA: It's a very competitive game, and it has no master, and this is why I fell in love with it. It's the grandest. It's the competitiveness that never stops, week in and week out.

### Q. Let's talk about you outside of golf. Is there anything we need to know about Adel outside of golf? What do you do for fun? What are your hobbies?

ADEL BALALA: I'm actually a very good football player. That was my first love is football, and outside the golf course, I do logistics. I have a business of my own, and I also run an ISP, which is an internet service provider, back in Kenya. Mainly that's what I do.

### Q. Can you tell us more about those two businesses?

ADEL BALALA: Yeah, I'll tell you where it started. Golf in Kenya is not a great hobby to have because it doesn't pay as much, so good players like me after education are forced to find a job outside of golf to make a living. So for me personally, I do end-to-end logistics, which is from the Mombasa port, across Kenya and on to the northern corridor, which is Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and all of that.

Aside from that, I have a tech company which is an internet service provider in Mombasa. It's just fibre-optic cables and supplying internet to homes.

### Q. Have you got any weird and wacky hidden talents?

ADEL BALALA: I don't run, I'll tell you, like the normal Kenyans. It's funny you ask me that. I love football. Every week I play.

### Q. Who's your favourite team, favourite player?

ADEL BALALA: Arsenal. Favourite player I would say is Thierry Henry.

### Q. What did you study?

ADEL BALALA: Business management at the University of Brighton actually in the UK.

### Q. What would you say your strength is in your own game? What is it that you're pretty strong at?

ADEL BALALA: I would say experience helps me a lot. I've been playing for a very long time. Other than that, I would say my short game. I'm a magician with the wedges. On this course I'd say it's my mental strength is what's going to get me through the four rounds.

### Q. Is the wedge your favourite club?

ADEL BALALA: Yes.

### Q. Is there anything that you're working on in your game? Are there areas that you want to develop?

ADEL BALALA: Yes, most definitely. It's my long irons and my driver. I would say I've been struggling a bit with



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them, but it's been a good couple of weeks coming into this tournament, and hopefully they become my strengths.

**Q. I know you've competed in the Kenyan Open on a number of occasions. What were the experiences like for you?**

ADEL BALALA: Very hard to blend into the European players who are playing week in week out throughout the season and for the Kenyans to just jump in one tournament of the year is very hard. I would say it doesn't make sense for us. But we try our best, and one of the main challenges again is the professionalism of things. They are very professional in how they approach the practice round as well as the tournament, and I think we need to learn a lot from that.

**Q. Was there any particular player that you really looked up to or really kind of inspired you in those kind of events?**

ADEL BALALA: In those kind of events, I don't know, golf in general I would say Tiger Woods definitely is the most influential player for all of us, but primarily I would say it's most of the Kenyan players who have done well. Greg Snow and Dismas Indiza have done really well for Kenya.

**Q. In terms of looking forward to this week, how are you feeling about your game this week? Are you feeling confident about your chances of contending?**

ADEL BALALA: Yes, definitely. I've seen the player list and a few good players here and there, but most definitely I have high chances of playing well. I've had a good couple of weeks, training a lot, and yeah, I've played Leopard Creek a few times. I think I'll find my way through the track this time.

**Q. What's your impressions of Leopard Creek?**

ADEL BALALA: Absolutely amazing. I won't even go further than that. There's nothing much I could say about it. It's absolutely amazing. Definitely the best destination I've played ever.

**Q. There's obviously lots of wildlife around here. What's the craziest animal you've seen when you've been on the golf course?**

ADEL BALALA: I've seen a few snakes. I fear snakes a lot, so I'll say snakes. But in Kenya we do have a lot of wildlife and we do have a lot of national parks around our golf courses, so yeah.

**Q. If you had to pick an animal maybe of the Big Five,**

**which African animal would you compare yourself to and why? Are you a lion because you've got the pounce --**

ADEL BALALA: Of course I was going for lion.

**Q. But you've got to explain why.**

ADEL BALALA: I'd say lion most definitely because I like to mark my territory, and not only that, I move with the pack. I don't like to move alone.

**Q. If you were to win the first ever Africa Amateur Championship this week, what would that mean?**

ADEL BALALA: That would be a lot of emotions because it's been a long journey for me, especially in the elite amateur level, and to get my first win at the African Amateur would be so significant because I'd be giving hope not only to the people around me but to all Kenyan golfers who are aspiring to reach great heights.

**Q. Do you think that's an important aspect of this championship? Do you think it'll inspire more golfers in your own country?**

ADEL BALALA: Most definitely, and that's all I work for. My success comes through giving hope and seeing other people flourish through my career.

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