

Africa Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Tuesday, 20 February 2024

Martin Slumbers



R&A
AFRICA AMATEUR
CHAMPIONSHIP

Q. Martin, how exciting is it to be here? I guess fresh event, new faces, more reach for the R&A. It's a very special week, isn't it.

MARTIN SLUMBERS: Yeah, it's a nice atmosphere, isn't it. It's been a while in the making. I know we only announced it about eight months ago, but it's been a few years of thinking about doing this and can we make it work.

I think for me, you look around and you see these faces, and last night at the reception, you'd say, yeah, this is worthwhile, and I'm kind of looking forward to the first tee shot tomorrow morning.

Q. Why has the R&A created events such as this?

MARTIN SLUMBERS: I think when you deep down look at what we believe in for amateur golf especially, it's about creating opportunities for people and creating pathways for people. It's none of our business what someone's ambitions are. It is our job, though, to create the environment that they can do what they believe they want to do, and if they're good enough, have that pathway to move to the next level.

This is the start of a long journey. There are a number of players here who are extremely good and a number here who are going to develop in the next decade. This is why we do it, and that's what's the most exciting.

Q. How do these events contribute to the growth in Africa, as well, because it's such an important thing, isn't it?

MARTIN SLUMBERS: Well, if you look at the population of Africa, the sporting ability in other sports, the age demographics here, this is a country that's got a lot of inherent athletes. If we in golf can tap into that, they can become one of the big forces in global sport in decades to come.

Hopefully we at the R&A have done our bit to kick-start that with this, and the players will go back to their clubs and their countries, and I bet you they'll start practising for next year, and the ones who are not playing here, they'll be

practising to try and get in the side. That will move the bottom half of the ability scale up, and that will over time create more and more opportunities.

Q. With the help of Johann Rupert, how special is his support in his backyard?

MARTIN SLUMBERS: I think what Johann has done with South Africa golf is truly extraordinary. They've produced wonderful players. When we were talking about doing this, there was only one person we wanted to talk to about it, help us do it, and that was Johann, and we're very grateful that we're playing on arguably the best golf course in Africa and arguably one of the best golf courses in the world, and I think these young men and women should feel lucky and privileged to actually have that opportunity.

Q. I'm sure you've dabbled outside the gates, but how truly special is it to be right next to Kruger Park? Like you saw the players, the atmosphere. It's pretty unique, isn't it, for the game of golf?

MARTIN SLUMBERS: Oh, yeah. The house that we're staying in, you look over outside, and you see the buffalos and all the animals in the river. It feels very alive, doesn't it.

Q. Speaking of alive, there's a lot of other initiatives that you have in place here in Africa. Can you talk us through a few of those?

MARTIN SLUMBERS: Well, they're all ones we're doing with the national federations around the country, and they're all aimed at either getting more grass-roots, taking some of the difficulties and costs of barriers away from people picking up the game to actually creating academies and abilities for people to develop, and all of that is contributing to this sort of pyramid that we've now got this event at the top, and you'll start to see more and more people playing at this level but also people playing for fun.

Q. As we look to the end of the week, what do you picture being a perfect week here in Africa as the two champions are crowned and obviously the invitations they receive, as well? It's an amazing opportunity.

MARTIN SLUMBERS: Yeah, I think for the whole R&A



... when all is said, we're done.®

team who have put in a lot of work, I hope to see them smiling and having joy at having created something special. For the two winners, then we'll be delighted to see them later in the year, and then they'll realise that there's a big game out there, and they're now part of it.

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