



# YOUNG GUN

Still only 13, this rising junior has the talent and focus that will see her going far in the sport

BY CLINTON VAN DER BERG

The sun was just beginning to dip over the horizon as Gemma Huxham settled back into the familiar comfort of her home at Ruimsig Country Estate.

It had been a whirlwind day, one spent amidst the electric atmosphere of Steyn City, watching the titans of the LIV Golf circuit command the fairways. For a thirteen-year-old with a golf bag of her own and a growing collection of silverware, seeing Bryson DeChambeau in the flesh was an invitation to the future.

'It was incredible,' she says, her voice bright with the lingering adrenaline of the day. To be in the presence of such elite athletes, to watch the precision of a player like DeChambeau, was a glimpse into a world she is rapidly claiming for her own.

Warm, open, and refreshingly chatty, Huxham possesses an independent streak that belies her age. While most 13-year-olds are navigating the social hierarchies of school, Huxham is navigating the mental complexities of championship matchplay. She is a young woman who knows exactly where she is going, and more importantly, exactly how much work it takes to get there.

Her journey to the tee box began almost as soon as she could walk. Introduced to the game as a toddler, she started with 'Future Golfers' while still in crèche at the age of three. By five, she was competing in 'SA Kids' tournaments, and the spark of interest turned into a full-blown passion.

Athleticism runs in the family – her mother, Liezl, was a netball player, and her father, Cornel, played cricket and rugby – but for Gemma, it





was the individual challenge of golf that stuck. Today, she balances a demanding training schedule with her studies at Dainfern College. It's a juggling act that requires a level of discipline many adults struggle to master.

'I try to get the balance right by sticking to a schedule,' she explains. 'I make time for golf and practice, and time for school. It's sometimes hard to catch up, but I have that discipline. I just go with it.'

That discipline was put to the ultimate test in February at The Els Club Copperleaf. Competing in the Flight Division of the SA Women's Amateur Championship, Huxham found herself two-down against the seasoned mid-amateur veteran Charlene Oosthuizen. It was the kind of high-pressure moment where many young players might crumble.

Instead, Huxham performed what has become her signature 'positive reset.'

'I hit a couple of bad shots, but I wasn't thinking about them,' she recalls. 'I was thinking about the next shot. I told myself that winning this would be a good thing to win.'

This mental toughness, and a laser focus on the immediate task, is what sets her apart. She watched Oosthuizen's calm demeanour and tucked the lesson away for future use. The result? A stunning comeback victory that solidified her reputation as one of South Africa's most formidable young talents.

This victory followed a massive breakthrough in April 2025, where she clinched the Silver Division at the Nomads SA Girls Rose Bowl Championship at Durbanville Golf Club.

While her trophies sit on a dedicated shelf outside her bedroom, a

## CHIP SHOTS

### **Weirdest shot played?**

It was at Magalies Park, where I played a shot I thought was headed for the water. Then I saw the ball running along the cart path and it ended up right next to the green.

### **Her 'must-have' item?**

Chocolate milk Steri-Stumpi, and biltong.

### **Favourite motto?**

Just play your way.

If she could play 18 holes **anywhere, where would she choose?**

St Andrews.

### **Best thing after a long day on the course?**

Cola tonic and lemonade.

### **Good luck charm?**

One of my clubs – a four hybrid. I hit it really well. Even if it's a bad shot, it just gets out.

### **Warm-up music?**

I listen to Callum Scott. His song Rise is very inspirational.

### **Favourite course?**

Lough Erne Resort in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, where she played the Champion of Champions event in 2024 and 2025.

### **Best way to relax?**

Lying on bed, watching a TV show, maybe Harry Potter.

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collection that is growing so quickly it may soon need a second level, Huxham is far from a one-dimensional athlete. When she isn't on the green, she is often found in the music room. As the vice-captain of the school choir, a marimba player, and a singer in the school band, Huxham finds a different kind of rhythm. An alto who can comfortably hit the high notes when the arrangement demands it, she loves the complexity of harmonies. It's perhaps this musicality that informs her secret weapon on the course: her putting.

'When I putt, I feel like the greens speak to me,' she says. 'I love slower greens.'

Huxham embraces them, reading the grass with an almost intuitive grace.

Despite her growing renown and the fact that she is increasingly recognised by her peers at Dainfern College, Huxham remains remarkably grounded. She finds the attention 'interesting' but doesn't let it distract her from the long game.

Her roadmap is clear: first, a golf scholarship to a top-tier university in the United States, and then, a spot on the professional tour. If she had her choice of a dream fourball, she'd tee off alongside her idols: Nelly Korda, Louis Oosthuizen, and, of course, Bryson DeChambeau.

For now, she is happy to keep practicing, keep singing, and keep listening to what the greens have to tell her.

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