



# FINAL ACT

A memorable national Open was won by a South African, whose every shot was cheered by a passionate home crowd

BY GARY LEMKE

Martin Vorster held his nerve when it mattered most to win his first event on the Sunshine Tour, by closing out the DNi Tour Championship presented by RMB at the always magnificent De Zalze Golf Club in Stellenbosch. He became the 25th different golfer to pick up a Tour win, with only Casey Jarvis (three) and Jayden Schaper and Luis Carrera (two) being multiple winners, but few players were more deserving of Vorster.

He had been in and around the top of the leaderboard on several occasions over the summer and after a course-record opening 63 at De Zalze, that consistency put him in the box seat.

'I've been working on the fundamentals of the swing and set-up, but I haven't changed too much there. It's been more a focus on just playing golf and being a bit more creative and reactive. I feel like a kid again just trying to hit different shots, and it's made a huge difference not worrying too much about how the swing looks and just playing.

'It's been a very consistent season. It's been a bit frustrating in the sense that I had a lot of good finishes between eighth and 20th, and a lot of weeks where I was just one or two shots outside the top five, which is where you want to be in terms of maximum points. I've felt like I've played a lot of good golf,' he said.

He led at De Zalze at halfway, before a moving-day 71 saw him slip three behind Jaco Prinsloo and two behind Altin van der Merwe, both also chasing their first win of the season. However, Vorster displayed all the consistency that had underscored his season when he hit the front around the turn. He never looked back, taking route 66 to come home.



In a purple patch from holes 6-10 he went birdie-par-eagle-birdie-birdie to move to the top of the leaderboard and then parred the last eight holes for an ultimately comfortable victory, despite Van der Merwe's late charge where he finished eagle-birdie for a 69

'It's incredible. My family have supported me all the way, and it was so special to win in front of them. If it wasn't for what my parents, and especially my dad, have done for my career I wouldn't be standing here. It's pretty emotional to have had my dad on the bag for this. It was so special to do it with him. I wouldn't have wanted it to be with anybody else' said Vorster.

On the eve of the DNi Tour championship, The Sunshine Tour held its annual season awards.

Jarvis took the Commissioner's Award, in recognition of the player who broke through and just kept on achieving. 'Casey did exactly this over the season. He's a wonderful young talent and we wish him all the best as he now looks forward to playing the Majors as well,' said Thomas Abt, Commissioner of the Sunshine Tour.

Herman Loubser was recognised by his fellow professionals with the Players' Player of the Year Award for a season in which he won on the Vodacom Origins of Golf series and had a further four top-five finishes in what has been his most successful season on the Tour.



#### BY THE NUMBERS

##### Lowest round:

61

**Kieran Vincent** (Waterfall City Tournament of Champions) **(pictured)**

##### Lowest winning scores (to par):

-30

Luis Careera (Kit Kat Cash & Carry Pro-Am),

-24

Casey Jarvis (VOG Final)

##### Playoff winners:

9

Jayden Schaper (Alfred Dunhill Championship, Mauritius Open),

Herman Loubser (VOG - Parys),

Jonathan Broomhead (Sunbet Challenge - Time Square),

Louis Albertse (Sunbet Challenge - Sun Sibiyá),

Jacques Kruyswijk (VOG - Devonvale),

Casey Jarvis (VOG Final),

MJ Viljoen (SDC Open),

Will Enefer (Cape Town Open)

##### Biggest winning margin:

10 strokes

Luis Carerra (Kit Kat Cash & Carry Pro-Am)



‘I wasn’t expecting this. When other players vote for you and they recognise how much work it takes and how hard it is to perform, it really is special to receive that,’ he said.

Shaun Norris received the Sportsman of the Year Award for his act of sportsmanship during his playoff with Schaper in December’s Alfred Dunhill Championship, when he applauded Schaper’s brilliant fairway bunker shot onto the green in the playoff.

‘We all strive to win tournaments, and here was a youngster, with all the talent in the world who had a wonderful year leading up to that event. It’s hard to win, so for him in that position, to pull off a shot like that, I just felt it deserved an applause. I was amazed by the shot,’ said Norris.

Hennie Otto was recognised for his longevity in a career that started on the Sunshine Tour in 1999 and which has seen him win multiple titles here and on the DP World Tour.

‘The Sunshine Tour gave me opportunities and from there I was able to play on the HotelPlanner Tour and DP World Tour. I want to thank the Tour for where I am now. And to the younger professionals, I’d like to say please realise the opportunities you get through the Sunshine Tour to achieve your higher goals in the game,’ said Otto.



**SUNSHINE TOUR AWARDS  
Sid News Trophy (Order Of Merit):**

Casey Jarvis

**Commissioner’s Award:**

Casey Jarvis

**Players’ Player of the Year:**

Herman Loubser

**Sportsman of the Year:**

Shaun Norris

**Executive Director’s  
Award:**

Hennie Otto

**Best Finish To Win:**

Daniel van Tonder

**Comeback Player of the  
Year:**

Haydn Porteous

**Media Choice and Style  
Player of the Year:**

Kyle Barker

**Gary Player Trophy  
(lowest scoring average):  
Jaco Prinsloo (pictured)**

Reflecting on the significance of the awards, Abt said: 'This was a wonderful celebration of our Tour and our players. We run a big Tour with roughly 30 events on our schedule, and this is a moment for the players to look back and realise they've done well this season.'

## 2025/26 SEASON WINNERS

- |                                                                                                         |                                                                                         |                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>3</b> <b>Casey Jarvis</b><br/>(Hyundai Open, Vodacom Origins Of Golf Final, Investec SA Open)</p> | <p><b>2</b> <b>Luis Carrera</b><br/>(FBC Zim Open, Kit Kat Cash &amp; Carry Pro-Am)</p> | <p><b>Jayden Schaper</b><br/>(Alfred Dunhill Championship, Mauritius Open)</p> |
| <p><b>1</b> <b>Louis Albertse</b><br/>(Sunbet Challenge – Sun Sibiya)</p>                               | <p><b>Ben Follett-Smith</b><br/>(Cell C Challenge)</p>                                  | <p><b>Kristoffer Reitan</b><br/>(Nedbank Golf Challenge)</p>                   |
| <p><b>Austin Bautista</b><br/>(Sunbet Challenge – Wild Coast)</p>                                       | <p><b>Deon Germishuys</b><br/>(PGA Championship)</p>                                    | <p><b>JC Ritchie</b><br/>(Stella Artois Players Championship)</p>              |
| <p><b>Oliver Bekker</b><br/>(Jonsson Workwear Durban Open)</p>                                          | <p><b>Michael Hollick</b><br/>(FNB Eswatini Challenge)</p>                              | <p><b>Samuel Simpson</b><br/>(Zambia Open)</p>                                 |
| <p><b>Dan Bradbury</b><br/>(Joburg Open)</p>                                                            | <p><b>Jacques Kruyswijk</b><br/>(VOG – Devonvale)</p>                                   | <p><b>Daniel van Tonder</b><br/>(The Courier Guy Playoffs – Serengeti)</p>     |
| <p><b>Jonathan Broomhead</b><br/>(Sunbet Challenge – Time Square)</p>                                   | <p><b>Herman Loubser</b><br/>(VOG – Parys)</p>                                          | <p><b>MJ Viljoen</b><br/>(SDC Open)</p>                                        |
| <p><b>MJ Daffue</b><br/>(NTT Data Pro-Am)</p>                                                           | <p><b>Malcolm Mitchell</b><br/>(Gary &amp; Vivienne Player Challenge)</p>               | <p><b>Kieran Vincent</b><br/>(Waterfall City Tournament of Champions)</p>      |
| <p><b>Hennie du Plessis</b><br/>(Blue Label Unlimited Challenge)</p>                                    | <p><b>Pieter Moolman</b><br/>(Limpopo Championship)</p>                                 | <p><b>Martin Vorster</b><br/>(DNI Tour Championship)</p>                       |
| <p><b>Will Enefer</b><br/>(Cape Town Open)</p>                                                          | <p><b>Haydn Porteous</b><br/>(VOG – Gowrie Farm)</p>                                    |                                                                                |
|                                                                                                         | <p><b>Warwick Purchase</b><br/>(Fortress Invitational)</p>                              |                                                                                |