

# PLOTTING A PATH

Ambitious, grounded,  
determined – there's another  
impressive young talent making  
her way through the ranks

BY CLINTON VAN DER BERG

On a windswept fairway in George, a young golfer steadies herself over the ball. The sun is low, the breeze sharp, but Isabella Ferreira is calm, almost serene.

At 22, she's already tasted the thrill of international victory, the sting of playoff heartbreak, and the quiet satisfaction of steady improvement. Yet what makes her compelling isn't just the scorecards or trophies. It's an unlikely journey: a tennis devotee turned pandemic golfer, now chasing Proteas colours and dreaming of the professional stage. Ferreira's story is one of resilience, friendship, and ambition, a reminder that sometimes the most extraordinary paths begin in the most ordinary backyards.

Born in Pretoria and now based in George, she plays out of George Golf Club and is currently pursuing her PGA of SA qualification through the Southern Cape Golf Academy.

Her journey into golf wasn't conventional, but what began as a way to pass the time with her father, Peter, has blossomed into a career path filled with promise and international success.

For most of her school years, Ferreira's world revolved around tennis. She was a dedicated player, even dabbling in hockey and athletics before narrowing her focus. But when the pandemic shut down tennis courts, she found herself drawn to the game her father loved. 'I was really bored at home,' she recalls. 'My dad was hitting balls in the garden, and I just picked up an interest from there.'





That spark quickly grew into a passion, and by 2022, after her family's move to George, Ferreira was taking golf seriously.

Joining the Southern Cape Golf Academy gave her more than just technical skills. It offered her a deeper understanding of the sport, from coaching and player development to the business side of golf. 'As a female golfer, it's important to keep learning and creating opportunities for growth,' she explains.

The academy has helped her build confidence, sharpen her communication, and carry herself with professionalism both on and off the course.

Like many young athletes, Ferreira has had to juggle academics, work, and competitive golf. With the support of mentors like Heinrich Lourens (the GM of Southern Cape Golf) and flexible working arrangements, she's managed to strike a balance.

'They gave me the flexibility to pursue my career,' she says. Mornings are often filled with classes and work, while afternoons are reserved for practice and tournaments.

Her results speak volumes. In 2026 alone, Ferreira has already made headlines, finishing runner-up in a dramatic five-hole playoff at the SA Women's Amateur Stroke Play Championship. There was also victory at the Western Province Women's Amateur, edging out rival and friend Charlotte Millard by a single shot, and strong showings at the North West Women's Open and GolfRSA International Amateur.



### CHIP SHOTS

**Favourite course you've ever played?** Al Ain in the UAE.

**Go-to snack during a round or tournament week?** Almonds and raisins, and goodies from Woolies.

**If you could play a round with any golfer, past or present, who would it be?** Nelly Korda.

**Favourite holiday destination to relax and reset?** Where I live in George is a really good holiday destination. Cape Town is nice too.

**One word your friends would use to describe you?** I don't know. They say I always look very mad or very serious because I constantly frown.

*'I like playing chess on the course'*



These performances build on her earlier triumphs, including winning the Egyptian Ladies Open in 2025, her first international title, and the GolfRSA Champion of Champions National Final in 2024.

Her contests with Millard have added intrigue to the amateur circuit. While their battles are fierce, Ferreira insists it's a healthy rivalry. 'We're really good friends. We support each other no matter what happens,' she says. That camaraderie pushes both to raise their game.

Ferreira describes herself as a conservative, strategic golfer. 'I like playing chess on the course,' she explains.

She prefers irons over drivers, choosing smart positioning over raw power. But she's candid about her weaknesses too: 'My putting has been a huge let down. My ball striking is incredible, but I've had to change my grip and work hard to improve.'

Her pre-round routine reflects her thoughtful approach. Arriving early, warming up, and then retreating to a quiet spot without technology helps her centre herself before competition.

Ferreira credits a wide circle of supporters for her progress, from her coach Vaughn Groenewald to mentors like Lourens, and of course, her parents. 'I have a lot of people back here that support me. George Golf Club always sends me congratulations without me even asking.'





Her sporting role model is Roger Federer, admired for his grace and professionalism. It's a fitting choice for a player who values composure and intelligence on the course.

Looking ahead, Ferreira's ambitions are clear. She wants to climb to the number one spot in the rankings and earn her Proteas colours. Beyond that, she's weighing the decision to turn professional, possibly next year or the year after. Her plan is pragmatic: start on the Sunshine Ladies Tour, then attempt qualifying for the Ladies European Tour. 'It's expensive to play internationally, so I'd probably begin here and then go to Q-School at the end of the year,' she explains.

When she's not competing, Ferreira enjoys playing padel, a sport that keeps her social and active. It's her way of unwinding and keeping balance in a life otherwise dominated by golf.

The prodigy represents the new wave of South African golf talent: ambitious, grounded, and determined to succeed. Her story resonates because it's not just about natural ability, but about resilience, adaptability, and the courage to chase dreams. From picking up a club in her backyard to winning on international soil, she's shown that passion can rewrite a career path.