

# ALFRED DUNHILL CHAMPIONSHIP

# Leopard Creek Times

DAILY NEWS

ROUND 2

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 2016



## Schwartzel in the hunt at Leopard Creek

**C**harl Schwartzel does his best to play down his dominance of Leopard Creek, the host of this week's Alfred Dunhill Championship. But the stats won't let him. After a round of six under par to share the lead with Ireland's Paul Dunne in Thursday's first round, Schwartzel is now 128 under par for his career in this tournament. That includes his four victories in this event, and

his four second place finishes. It makes him 83 shots better than any other player. "I wasn't doing anything wrong really. I was just really grinding hard to make pars, and when I did find some good shots, I capitalised by making birdies," he said. "It was just a matter of getting the execution I was looking for, and on the back nine it came together nicely. Luckily I've been around here a lot of times. I know where all the

hot spots are on this course and that knowledge helped." Schwartzel and Dunne are one stroke clear of a pack of players including reigning BMW South African Open champion Brandon Stone and Spanish star Pablo Larrazabal. And there are a host of former champions chasing in Richard Sterne at two shots off the pace, and Branden Grace three behind.





## Stone lists 13<sup>th</sup> as his “favourite” in world golf

Leopard Creek’s par-five 13<sup>th</sup> is one of the most iconic holes in golf with its green overlooking the Crocodile River and the vast expanse of the Kruger National Park. “It’s my favourite hole in the

world,” says South Africa’s Brandon Stone. “The location is the best in the world. Pebble Beach has the cliffs, but nowhere else in the world do you get that view of the Crocodile River and the Kruger National Park

beyond. We saw a baby hippo there in the practice round, and in the distance we saw a massive herd of elephants.” But Stone is equally impressed with the design of the hole.

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"It's a really tricky tee shot – you've got to hit a great tee shot to hit that fairway. And then it's still not an easy green to go into. About nine times out of 10 I'll actually lay up.

If it's anything more than a six iron it's actually not worth going for it in two because that green is so tricky to hit. "If you can play that hole a couple under par for the week I think you'll be more than happy.

"I think a lot of guys are going to get a little too greedy and it's going to come and bite them a little bit. "And then if they go over the back something else could bite them."

"The location is the best in the world. Pebble Beach has the cliffs, but nowhere else in the world do you get that view of the Crocodile River and the Kruger National Park beyond." - *Brandon Stone*







## Ahlers chasing European Tour glory

**S**outh Africa's Jaco Ahlers got his first full European Tour round underway when he posted a four-under-par 68 opening round at Leopard Creek. It was good enough to ease him towards the top of the leaderboard in the first tournament of the new European Tour season, and just a month after Ahlers earned his Tour card at the qualifying school. And Ahlers is already looking to make his mark on the international golfing stage. "Well, I've got a card now and it's a next step in life, and a win on the European Tour would be unbelievable. That's the next goal."



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## Art of Leopard Creek

Leopard Creek is famous for the art of its bronze leopard sculptures on every tee, which were created by South African sculptor Dylan Lewis. Each one reflects a moment in the day of this majestic animal. In producing the bronzes at Leopard Creek, Lewis used a particular leopard as his subject and which he had a five-year relationship with. "He passed away a while ago. It was very moving for me and I felt a sense of loss. There's the personal connection to a particular animal, and a deeper connection which came up a lot. I understand more about how animals became archetypes for our ancestors."



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*Charl Schwartzel (left) and Keith Horne enjoying the new Tribute Course during the Par 3 Challenge.*

## Masters memories for Charl

Charl Schwartzel perhaps enjoyed the new Par 3 Challenge on Leopard Creek's Tribute Course a little more than most as one of the holes brought back memories of his 2011 Masters triumph. The eighth hole on the Tribute Course captures the spirit of Augusta National's 16th, and Schwartzel said during the Par 3 Challenge he faced a putt there that was exactly like the birdie he made on the 16th to win the Masters. "That putt turned 100% exactly like my putt turned back in 2011. It was the

same amount of break and it was about the same distance and that putt went in the same and that's why I lifted my hand like that. It was just like a flashback of what happened and that was really cool."

He was full of praise for the work done in creating the par-three course. "What an amazing little golf course. To have played all the holes that they have captured the spirit of was really very neat. They've done such an amazing job."

"What an amazing little golf course. To have played all the holes that they have captured the spirit of was really very neat. They've done such an amazing job."

- Charl Schwartzel





*"I love the animals here at Leopard Creek. I love South Africa. This is a special place for me."*  
- Pablo Larrazabal.



*"The 18<sup>th</sup> is a classic risk and reward hole. It's the kind of hole you don't mind missing the fairway because then you aren't tempted to go for it."* - Darren Clarke.



*"The practice facility here at Leopard Creek is awesome. Augusta has a pretty impressive practice facility, but this is one of a kind."*  
- Heath Slocum.



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