Gary Player

INVITATIONAL

PRESENTED BY

Coca-Cola

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GOLF ICON GARY PLAYER STILL A CHAMPION FOR CHARITY

(Fairmont Zimbali Resort, South Africa) - When Gary Player beat Australian Kel Nagle in a play-off to win the 1965 US Open, South Africa's only career Grand Slam winner made good on a promise that shocked and surprised the golfing fraternity.

Four years earlier, Player had promised United States Golf Association executive secretary Joe Dey that if he ever won in America again, he would return his prize money for charity.

True to his word, Player returned his first-place cheque and asked that it be shared between the Cancer Society and the USGA for the promotion of junior golf. The $1 000 playoff bonus, plus an equal amount out of his own pocket, went to Player's caddie.

At the time the gesture went down as one of the greatest acts of generosity in sports history, but in a career spanning more than 50 years, Player has shown that his kindness and big-heartedness knows no boundaries.

Player won nine Majors, nine Senior Majors, 166 tournaments worldwide and a career Grand Slam with infectious enthusiasm and a zest for life and golf that never waivered. That determination to perform to the best of his abilities always made him a tough competitor, and in his twilight years he is using that same passion, grit and determination in his relentless pursuit to use golf for the greater good of mankind.

When the clock strikes midnight to signal his 76th birthday on 1 November, Player will be in Shanghai, China to host the fourth leg of the Gary Player Invitational series in partnership with Coca-Cola to raise money for the Yunnan AIDS Orphans whose lives have been hit hardest by HIV.

A milestone age for any person, golf's International ambassador is still a shining example of how to treat age as simply a number.

At 76, he still packs more into a day than men half his age - and he loves every minute of it. Speaking from Shanghai, Player said: "I still have so much to do. My talent was a gift and golf has given me a fantastic career. Now it's my responsibility to recognise what I received and pay it forward."

Player said he was fortunate to overcome challenges in his life with his abilities and the good people who helped him along the way. "I wanted to find a way to help children to achieve their dreams despite the challenges they face," he said.

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“My son Marc came up with the concept of the Gary Player Invitational series more than a decade ago. I think the format we have, partnering a cross-section of people as an alliance team on the golf course, is a great one.

“Golf has incredible potential to raise funds for charity and we have proven that with this series, having raised more than R250-million for charities benefiting underprivileged children worldwide.”

The Gary Player Invitational China, in Shanghai, represents the Asian leg of a series that also travels to the United Kingdom, Abu Dhabi, the United States and South Africa as part of the Player Foundation's work in raising funds for underprivileged children.

In less than two weeks, Player will be hard at work again, hosting the 12th edition of the Gary Player Invitational presented by Coca-Cola in South Africa.

“Over the last 11 years years, the Gary Player Invitational has been played at top venues like Pecanwood in the North West, Arabella in the Western Cape and Fancourt in the Southern Cape,” Player said. “We are very excited to be taking the tournament to a new venue, the Zimbali Coastal Resort in KwaZulu-Natal.

“We are expecting another top field for this year’s event and I expect to see a great exhibition of golf at Zimbali. More mostly, the tournament is primarily about raising money for local charities in the province and making a difference in the lives of underprivileged children in South Africa.”

The Gary Player Invitational presented by Coca-Cola will take place at the Zimbali Coast Resort in KwaZulu-Natal from 10-13 November. The format of each tournament partners professionals from the regular Tour and Champions Tour with business leaders and celebrities or sports stars in a pro-am competition.

Confirmed participants include Player, 1991 Masters champion Ian Woosnam, European Ryder Cup captain Mark James, two-time LPGA Major winner Sally Little, Champions Tour and European Senior Tour winners DJ Russell and Tony Johnstone, former French Open champion Vincent Tshabalala and SA PGA Championship winner Roger Wessels.

Further participant announcements to follow.

- ENDS -

Tickets are available at the venue or from Computicket at R75 per adult per day. Entry for children under 18 is free.

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Notes to the Editors:

About the Gary Player Invitational Global Series

The Gary Player Invitational Series, with events in the United Kingdom, United States, China and South Africa, is aimed at raising money for non-profit charitable organisations, whose mission is to provide quality education for disadvantaged and underprivileged children and strengthen impoverished communities plagued by disease and crime.

For over a decade, top professionals, all-star sportsmen, celebrities, and businessmen have come together for the annual Gary Player Invitationals in support of underprivileged children. For more information about our charity series, please visit www.garyplayerinvitational.com.

About Black Knight International

Black Knight International, the global holding company for all divisions of The Player Group, maintains a strong presence in North and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Gary Player's penchant for wearing black attire on the golf course, coupled with his competitive style of play and courteous demeanour, earned him the name, "The Black Knight." The recognizable Black Knight logo identifies all the companies of The Player Group, including the Gary Player®, Player® and Black Knight® brands.

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