



Gary Player
INVITATIONAL
PRESENTED BY
Coca-Cola

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GOLF MEETS GLAMOUR AT 2011 GARY PLAYER INVITATIONAL

(Zimbali Coastal Resort, South Africa) – Four leggy fairway blondes will flank Gary Player when South Africa’s Grand Slam champion hosts the Gary Player Invitational presented by Coca-Cola from 10-13 November 2011.

European Tour winners Lee-Anne Pace and Diana Luna, rising European Ladies Tour star Carly Booth and two-time LPGA Major winner Sally Little will brighten up the fairways at the Zimbali Coastal Resort, adding some fabulous glamour to Africa’s premier charity golf event.

Italy’s Luna will be making her debut alongside a star-studded field of professional golfers, celebrities and businessmen who combine in a 36-hole fourball alliance competition while the professionals also compete in a separate 36-hole betterball medal competition.

Luna turned professional in 2001 after a stellar amateur career and broke through for her maiden victory at the 2004 Tenerife Ladies Open. In 2009 she underlined her growing stature by becoming the first Italian player with back-to-back wins on the Ladies European Tour. Her victory at the AIB Ladies Irish Open, followed six days later by the SAS Ladies Masters, landed her another Italian first - a spot in the European Tour for the 2009 Solheim Cup.

Taking time out for the birth of her daughter Elena, Luna played in only five tournaments in 2010, but the Italian got back to her winning ways in May this year with victory at the Unicredit Ladies German Open, where she completed four flawless rounds for a total of 24-under 264, setting a record in the event for four rounds without a single bogey.

Less than a month later, she held off South Africa’s Pace, Sophie Giquel-Bettan of France and Australian Kristie Smith to win the Deutsche Bank Ladies Swiss Open by one shot. Luna came close to collecting her third title this season at the recent Lacoste Ladies Open de France, losing in a play-off to England’s Felicity Johnson.

With five victories and 24 top 10 finishes on the Ladies European Tour, Luna will no doubt add depth to the field. But off the golf course, she is also a huge advocate for charity and has volunteered for the World Food Programme since 2001.

It will be a second visit to South Africa for Booth, who made her debut alongside SA cricketer Shaun Pollock, European Tour winner Tony Johnstone and businessman Dr Hans-Walter Peters of Berenberg Bank at Fancourt last year.



Booth, Scotland's answer to Michelle Wie, established her credential as one of Britain's rising stars when she became the youngest-ever player at 15 to represent Great Britain and Ireland in the Curtis Cup in 2008. A year later she claimed another first as the youngest-ever Scot at just 17 to qualify for the Ladies European Tour.

Booth had to juggle golf with completing her studies in her rookie season but managed to keep her playing privileges on the LET. Her best performances this season include a share of 21st at the Deloitte Dutch Ladies Open and a tie for 19th at the Ladies Scottish Open. Following a recent tie for 24th at the Sanya Ladies Open, she currently ranks 107th on the Henderson Money List with earnings of €12 668 after 14 starts.

"It is not often that someone as young and unknown as me gets the chance to play with a legend like Gary Player, so there was no doubt in my mind what I would be doing this November," she said. "Children should be everyone's number one priority. Although I am still young myself, it is an honour for me to be part of this special event and do my bit to raise money for the children of South Africa."

Pace made her debut in this event last year on the back of a watershed year in her professional career, playing alongside Major winner Gary Player, cricket legend Brian Lara and businesswoman Claudia Schoenfeld.

The Mossel Bay golfer won her maiden Ladies European Tour title at the Deutsche Bank Swiss Open, followed with three more victories before she claimed the Suzhou Taihu Ladies Open in a tight four-way playoff to cement her position at the top of the Henderson Money List.

Pace, who has been splitting her time between Europe and the United States, remains winless this season. She played in half a dozen tournaments on the LPGA Tour and made the cut in four and come close to lifting her sixth and seventh titles in Europe with runner-up finishes in Spain and Switzerland. Pace did record seven top 10 finishes this season and ranks 11th on the Henderson Money List.

She is thrilled at the prospect of joining the stellar line-up at Zimbali.

"I really enjoyed the event last year, so I was holding my thumbs for a repeat invitation," said Pace, who holds a degree in psychology from the University of Tulsa. "I looking forward to doing my bit to help Mr Player raise money for charity and the sunny weather in South Africa won't hurt either."

Little also makes a welcome return to the Gary Player Invitational.

A two-time Major winner and 15-time winner on the LPGA Tour, Little teed it up in the event from 2006 to 2008 and has been on the winning side once. In 2007, she combined with current world number one Luke Donald to lift the betterball title and the pair partnered Alex Maditsi of Coca-Cola to victory in the alliance team competition.

"It's been a few years, but I am absolutely delighted to return," said Little. "The golf will no doubt be competitive, but this event is all about the children and isn't it wonderful that we can be playing to raise funds for their benefit so close to the Christmas holidays?"

These lovely ladies will all share the fairways of Zimbali with Grand Slam champion Player and other Champions Tour stars including 1991 Masters champion Ian Woosnam, European Ryder Cup captain Mark James, 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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