

COLUMN

Working Hard

Compleat Golfer's playing editor is Louis Oosthuizen and this month he reflects on a few things and looks at what lies ahead



The US Open at Erin Hills produced yet another first-time Major champion and congratulations must go to Brooks Koepka for winning it. My own game felt OK all week, but I just couldn't get it going and build momentum. After a first round of 74 I shaved the beard I'd been growing for a month or two, because it was quite hot out there on the course! I then had rounds of 70 and 68 and felt that if I had a fast start on the Sunday, anything could happen. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get on a roll. After the US Open I took a couple of days off and took the family on a short holiday, before getting focused on The



Open Championship at Royal Birkdale. Having grown up at the coast, I was looking forward to the course in Southport. It's one of the best courses in England and although I wrote this before The Open was played and you'll be reading it after the event, I was hopeful of a good showing there. Being a links course, exposed to the elements, the tee-off times one is allocated can make a big difference in the opening two rounds. You can get an early-morning tee-off and shoot a red number, and then the wind

comes up in the afternoon and par becomes a real challenge. You definitely need a bit of luck when it comes to the tee-off times and what the weather is doing. Looking ahead, I'll also be at The PGA Championship. Last year I had a solid tournament, finishing in a tie for 22nd after rounds of 68, 70, 70 and 68. Branden [Grace] did the best of our South Africans and it would be good if, along with Charl [Schwartzel], we can keep our flag flying. I also want to say congratulations to Allister

Coetzee and the Springboks for beating France 3-0 in their Test series in South Africa. I'm a massive rugby fan - the Boks and the Stormers - so it was good to cheer on the boys from afar. Let's hope they can continue the revival! At the beginning of July I committed to coming back to South Africa for the Nedbank Golf Challenge at Gary Player Country Club in early November. This will be my seventh appearance and I'll be hoping to improve on my best finish of fourth in 2012.

I'm always excited to play at the Nedbank Golf Challenge and I can't wait to tee it up again this year. Playing in front of a home crowd is always a lot of fun. It all adds up to make this one of the special weeks on Tour. And, obviously, it's always good being home, getting a bit of sunshine and seeing the bush at that time of year. Of course, it's all still a bit down the road, so I'm not thinking about it too much right now. There is still plenty of hard work ahead in the coming weeks and months. ☺

CHIPPING ON THE GREEN

This is something not to be tried unless you've developed a skill for it. Even then, things can go horribly wrong. You might have seen some pros do it. There are times when your ball lands on the putting surface, but it's impossible to get near the hole if you're using a putter, because the hole is tucked away on the other side of a bunker that encroaches on the green. An amateur would putt around the bunker, but the slope would take it away and the chances of getting close to the pin aren't good. I would chip it to take the slope out of the picture. I open the face a little bit and let the 'bounce' of the club do all the work. I'm going at the grass, but not taking any grass off of the surface. The key is to use a lot of shoulders. I take a different grip, a split grip, so I don't get 'handsy' with the shot. With the split grip, my hands are far apart, so it's a shoulders-only shot. And I mustn't be scared to take on the grass.



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