

## The Rise and Rise of Jacques van Tonder

By Manfred Seidler

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A good wine gets better and better with age, and although still very young - Jacques is in his second year at UP studying BSC Sport Science PGA Golf - Jacques v Tonder is improving daily in his Golfing.

In 2008 he was sent to the UK to compete on the hallowed turf of St Andrews Golf course in Scotland against the best University Golfers in the World. He finished 12. "Not bad for my first international tournament."

Last Sunday he added another notch to his victory belt by winning the Gauteng North U23 Golf Championships at the Waterkloof Course. Despite scoring 3 three puts in the first round he still finished that with a score of 68. His second round of 18 holes was also completed in 68 for an 8 below final score. "On the second round I had only 21 puts, the average on tour is 27 puts per round." The success in the putting comes after hard work on his putting and a change in grip. Such is the dedication and passion of Jacques that when I got hold of him last night to speak to him, he was watching the World Accenture Match Play.

It is not only for the recreation side that Jacques watches the Golf on TV, but he also learns a lot. "I look out for things such as the pre shot routines they go through. You can learn a lot from that, especially how they focus for a specific drive or put that they need to do. You also, believe it or not, get a feel for how they play in different weather conditions. So it is important to spend time analyzing the play of the pro's."

Jacques only started playing Golf just over 3 years ago, but his improvement has been incredible. A potential career in cricket was scuppered due to selection policies and Jacques and his father decided to move to the Golf Course. Under the tutelage of Athol Dowie at the Pretoria Country Club, Jacques quickly improved, to the extent that he was invited to attend the TUKS PGA Course. The course is wide ranging giving those who have potential the opportunity to become pro golfers or move into management, marketing or even coaching. Its also comes with the partnership of the High Performance Centre at the University of Pretoria and their input has been incredibly valuable.

The big highlight for Jacques is obviously the trip to St Andrews where Tuks emerged as victors of the tournament. But he has also competed for the USSA Golf Team earlier this year in a four ball series. The big goal for the year is to represent Gauteng North at the SA Championships but is very aware that he cannot let his studies slide either.

He next plays on 8-10 March at the Northern Amateur Tournament in Johannesburg.

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