

press release

Jean Van De Velde to coach Emirati students at Abu Dhabi Golf Championship

Standard Chartered offers chance of lifetime to young golfers

13 January, 2009, Abu Dhabi – Ten lucky Emirati students are being given the chance to have a lesson with charismatic French star, Jean Van de Velde, at this week's Abu Dhabi Golf Championship, running 15 to 18 January.

The exclusive golf lesson will mark the end of the intensive Standard Chartered Young UAE Leaders Golf Programme in which 25 students from the Abu Dhabi Men's College and Abu Dhabi Women's College participated and will reward the 10 most promising candidates with an hour's session on the National Course's new driving range, with the popular golfer, who finished T19 at the British Open in 2008.

Jeremy Parrish, CEO, Standard Chartered Abu Dhabi & Al Ain explained that since 2006, the Bank has aimed to foster and sustain golf's long-term presence in Abu Dhabi.

"This year, as part of our community programme, we wanted to make the sport more accessible to the UAE youth. We believe that Jean's successes and obvious love for the game make him the ideal person to take local interest in golf to the next level. We hope Jean will instill a similar passion for the sport among the emirate's leaders of tomorrow," he said.

Van de Velde made international headlines while leading the 1999 British Open at Carnoustie, when he blew a three-stroke lead and, failing to clear the Barry Burn in two, famously rolled up his trouser legs and removed his shoes and socks at the 72nd hole, finally losing the subsequent three-man playoff to Paul Lawrie.

The Frenchman will now be applying the same dedication to his first 2009 event, the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship in his bid to claim his maiden National Course title.

“Introducing youngsters to golf early on is key to the future of the sport both here in the UAE and internationally,” said Van de Velde. “That’s why I’m so pleased to spend some time with the kids today. It’s important that the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship encourages kids to interact with our great game. Congratulations to Standard Chartered for creating this community initiative”.

For golf enthusiasts who miss out on a lesson with Van de Velde, there is a solution. The Standard Chartered Golf Zone, presently located on the Abu Dhabi Corniche until Tuesday 13 January will move to the Championship Spectator Village and offer free 10-minute lessons with PGA-qualified coaches for all ages and abilities. The Golf Zone has been proving a popular attraction on the Abu Dhabi Corniche this week where up-and-coming players got to grips with the basics of the game.

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For more information, contact:

Sam Gad

Media Relations and Communications Manager
Standard Chartered MENA
T: +971 4 508 5916
M: +971 50 900 7141
Sam.Gad@standardchartered.com

Lilian Yong-Babani

Regional Head Corporate Affairs Middle East and North Africa
Tel : +971502401273
Email : Lilian.Yong-Babani@standardchartered.com

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