

Anybody who should Google 'Kim Williams South African golfer' would quickly learn that this lady is no stranger to winning tournaments and receiving awards.

On the very first Google page on which her name appears can be read: "Kim Williams picks up second Compleat Golfer award; Williams claims victory in SA's Women's Amateur Championship; Kim Williams is WPGA Golfer of the Year."

From the above can be deduced that Williams knows how to handle the pressures associated with playing competitive golf.

The last major highlight for the former player of the Tuks High Performance Academy was to represent South Africa at the Spirit International Amateur Golf Championship, played at Whispering Pines Golf Club in the USA.

Williams has good reason to refer to this Championship as the 'Olympics of amateur golf'. The event features 20 countries from six continents. Each Country is represented by their two best men and two best women players. She proved her steel by finishing third in the individual competition as well as, with Lara Weinstein as her partner, third in the women's team competition.

However, at the end of last year the 27-year-old Williams realized that it was time for her to move on. Encouraged by the success she had achieved as an amateur player, she decided to turn professional. When asked about her decision to play

professionally she explained that she had basically achieved all the goals she had set for herself as an amateur.

"I started playing competitively when I was 19. During the past eight years I had represented the South African Amateur team ten times and won 30 amateur tournaments.

"It had always been my goal to play professionally. Therefore, in December, I decided to 'bite the bullet' as they say and so I went to the Tour School in Morocco to see if I could qualify to play in the Ladies European Tour.

"During stage one there were 150 players from all over the world who were trying to qualify. Only 18 went through to the next round. About 130 players played in stage two of whom only 30 qualified. I was lucky to finish tied for 10th and therefore received my players card for the Tour."

Williams seemingly adjusted easily to her new golfing status, because she won at Houghton, which was the first competition in which she played as a professional.

"It was not as easy as it may sound. I did not expect to be nervous, but for the first six holes I was as nervous as I have ever been. The last six holes, when I realized that I was in with a chance to win, was also nerve wrecking. It was a different type of nervousness from what I had experienced when I was playing amateur golf.

"My main challenge now is to try to retain my player's card so that I won't have to go through the Tour

School process again. It ought not to be too difficult. I just need to be among the top-100 money earners on the European Tour, but I certainly will not take anything for granted. To survive means that I will have to play good golf consistently."

Williams decided to play in the European Tour first because it is better suited to her playing style.

"I am a percentage golfer, which means that I don't like to take large risks by forcing big drives. Although the European courses are shorter on average than those in the USA they tend to be trickier, but I am confident that I will be able to handle that.

"In the USA the emphasis is on playing big drives."

The reason why Williams started to play golf at a relatively late stage was because she was an avid cricketer and hockey player at school.

"I received provincial colours in both sports and was selected to play for the SA Under-19 cricket team. Hockey was actually my big passion but because of all sorts of politics I continued to miss out on being selected for the national teams. This was very frustrating.

"It was my dad who suggested that, if I wanted to make a career of playing professionally, I should take up an individual sport. My brothers, who play socially, encouraged me to take up golf and my dad paid for a few golf lessons. I have been playing ever since.



Kim Williams

Text: Wilhelm de Swardt | Images: TuksGolf