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MEDIA RELEASE

All provinces again expected at SBS Bank Golf Invitational

All of New Zealand's 15 provincial associations are expected to field teams and chase honours from defending champions North Harbour at the 33rd annual SBS Bank Golf Invitational in March.

Officially recognised as the National Provincial Teams Stroke Play Championships by New Zealand Golf, the SBS Bank Golf Invitational is compulsory for all amateur golfers wishing to play for New Zealand.

This year the invitational tees off on Friday 5 March at the SBS Bank Invercargill Golf Course, Otatara, with free entry to all public spectators. Day one will feature the Am Am tournament - A Four Ball Best Ball teams' event where sponsors are drawn to play with the invited representative team players, in teams of four.

Rounds one and two of the 72-hole teams' championship will be played on Saturday 6 March with the four lowest scores from each team counting in each round. Rounds three and four will be played on Sunday 7 March.

SBS Bank Invercargill manager Neil Bramley said his team was always enthusiastic about volunteering in the SBS Bank marquee for the Friday event.

"It's a great atmosphere, everyone's out to enjoy themselves and have a bit of fun. But that doesn't mean there isn't some serious golf played as well – it's rather brilliant to be a part of it all."

"It is great to be able to partner such a key national sporting event right here in Southland, while knowing that the charitable nature of the tournament means that this year's recipient, the Southland branch of the RNZSPCA, will get to benefit from a \$10,000 donation.

"SBS Bank is committed to supporting its customers and communities so this year the \$10,000 proceeds of the 2010 SBS Bank Golf Invitational are going to an organisation with a SBS Star account for non-profit groups. We then let our SBS Bank members vote for their favourite charitable group with the SPCA coming up trumps," Mr Bramley said.

"The team at SBS Bank would like to say a big thank you to all our loyal customers who took the time to vote for their favourite charitable group. We know they appreciate your support."

The SBS Golf Invitational is designed to encourage and expose amateur golf locally and support and encourage amateur golf on a national basis, while providing the opportunity for the tournament's many sponsors and patrons to support deserving charitable organisations.

The tournament also provides the opportunity for all golf and service clubs in Southland to become fully involved and integrated in a project through the incorporation of a special team's event within the Am Am tournament.

Invitational secretary Jane Carroll said players for each provincial team are expected to be named by Monday 15th February.

This year's Charity 4-Ball Tournament, affectionately known as 'Walter's Wednesday' will be held on Wednesday 24 February, at Queens Park, prior to the Invitational and is a great way for golfers to get involved in the national golf tournament. There are still some spaces free if anyone wanted to enter by contacting the Queens Park Golf Club.

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