

# SAX AND TAN'S GOLFING FAMILY

WITH JURONG'S CLOSURE, SGA BOSS TO CHANNEL ENERGIES TO RAISING STANDARD, STATUS OF LOCAL GOLF

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At the stroke of midnight on Dec 31, Ross Tan will play the Auld Lang Syne with his saxophone. And although the song's message is that old acquaintances are forgotten and never brought to mind, the days of long ago and times that are gone will surely be brought to mind.

It will be a night of nostalgia and tears for Jurong Country Club (JCC) members attending the momentous occasion when the championship course will be officially handed over to the Land Transport Authority for conversion to a rail station and track.

Tan, 60, the captain of the club since 2012, knows that for him and his 2,700 (spouse not included) club members it is a sad parting of ways – the breaking up of a relationship and bond built over the years in the name of golf and social activities.

But Tan is a realist, a pragmatist. He knew that when he received a phone call in mid-year stating the Government's land acquisition decision from a JCC committee member who woke him up from bed in the wee hours of the morning while he was on holiday in Dubai, there was not going to be a turning back on this.

And he could not sleep after that for Jurong had quite recently done a \$24 million makeover that turned the course into a "must play" for golfers.

So the next course of action was to set up a series of meetings with Government boards and bodies linked to the high speed rail project and get the best deal for the club members.

And now Tan believes that the sum of \$44,000 for each golfing member will never be fair compensation, as the enjoyment of playing on a course like Jurong has become a limited option because its course condition has few equals.

Over a cup of teh tarik in an interview at Orchid Country Club recently, a saddened, sentimental Tan swallowed spit several times as he reminisced about the good times.

But the affable Tan accepted the reality check like a good citizen before looking ahead to the challenges the sport of golf was to face in the years to come as more golf clubs are set to go the Jurong way.

So a door is to close, but for Tan another opens. He had successfully made himself the go-to man for golf in Singapore with the knowledge that

he would have to forego the position of JCC captain, a powerful position that he had served with honour and dignity.

As the new president of the Singapore Golf Association, he is bent on serving the golfing community and leading a team of loyal and committed executive committee members to the mammoth task of ensuring that golf enhances its status in the island in the face of many more "hazards" to come in the near future.

Tan says: "So far our amateur golfers have given of their best. But we still lag behind many countries in Asia on the continental scene. I was at the Asian Championships in South Korea recently and I saw the difference."

## WHAT WE NEED IS HELP TO WORK ON THE MENTAL AND MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS FOR OUR GOLFERS

— ROSS TAN (RIGHT)

"Our players can string a 65 on one day, but can collapse to a 78 the next day. We have found it tough to string four good rounds, unlike the Australians, Koreans and Thais whose worst score is even-par."

"What we need is help to work on the mental and motivational aspects for our golfers. He can be a local or foreigner who is based in Singapore."

On the subject of talent, Tan feels that there are some who slip through the cracks because of the lack of talent scouting.

"We have to look beyond the club scene, for there could be good youngsters from the public courses and driving ranges."

Tan's plan is to have a junior squad catering to the under-12s, in addition to the Development and Nation-

ball squads. He has tasked the dynamic Lyn Sen, a leading woman player and lady captain of Sentosa Golf Club, to take charge of junior development.

In this respect, a major setback for golf is its exclusion as a priority sport from the Singapore Sports School curriculum.

But instead of moaning about it, Tan has had discussions with the school to maintain some links so that golfers can still be accepted as students in the Wood-

lands-based institution.

Now that the Royal and Ancient (R&A) has set up an office in Singapore (at Sentosa), Tan hopes to tap the expertise and support from the Britain-based famed golfing body to enhance junior golf here.

The much-travelled and busy Tan, who still runs a business, has also met up with the Malaysian Golf Association big-wigs to work out a partnership that will enhance golf in the light of Kuala Lumpur staging the South-east Asia Games next year.

Tan was a key bowling official who switched to playing golf after the 1996 Asian Games because of the influence of then-bowling national coach Madako Amano, a Japanese leading sportsman.

Tan himself had dabbled with foot-

ball, bowling and tennis during his schooling days at St Andrew's and rugby in the army as a winger for Artillery before turning out for Du-nearn Lions in the local league as a second row forward.

### PASSION

Bespectacled Tan has a scholarly look, but sport has been his passion from young, admitted the son of a businessman.

"I certainly get a kick out of sport," said the 13.2 handicap index golfer who names the legendary Jack Nicklaus as his favourite golfer.

He got hooked to golf after walking 18 holes as a spectator at Jurong when his "good kaki" Eddie Tan was playing a social round. And there was no turning back after that as he

bought a set of clubs and took lessons from former national pro Bill Phua at Temasek.

For Tan, also a member of Sentosa, Singapore Island Country Club and Keppel, golf is now a job as it takes up so much time, even at the expense of his business missing the occasional beat.

But the ever-smiling Tan, who has achieved one ace at Seletar in a social game, says that he came into golf management with open eyes, and he will leave no stone unturned in his efforts to raise the standards and status of golf in Singapore.

"There cannot be immediate returns. I am prepared to wait. But as long as the means to the end is in proper order, I think we can fulfil what we set out to do. There is no

way I can do it alone. I have selected good people to help me.

"I need the support of SportSG, the media, the sponsors and all the stakeholders. It has got to be a team effort," stressed Tan, who sees golf as a sport for great networking and bonding.

Stresses, the family man and father of three daughters, has had many. And he knows that as he journeys into his leadership role with sincerity and fortitude, he will no doubt encounter heartaches and headaches.

But the music room in his Pasir Panjang home where he chills out often, with the saxophone as his lone companion, provides him hope and solace.

And gives his mind desire and direction.



Photo courtesy of Ross Tan

ADVERTORIAL

## GOLF FITNESS MYTHS DEBUNKED

**MYTH 1**  
Golf fitness is only for professionals

Anyone, from PGA pros to weekend hackers, will benefit from golf specific fitness training. As swing flaws are due to poor stability and limited flexibility, incorporating short core-strengthening exercises and other forms of cardio training can help eliminate these issues and prevent injuries.

**MYTH 2**  
Stretching is unnecessary

Skipping stretching, particularly in the feet, can result in an increase in fatigue and tightness. As golfers spend hours walking on the course, proper and timely stretching daily before and after each round is essential. A simple massage done with a golf ball on the bottom of the feet every morning after waking up, and every night before bedtime will help increase your flexibility.

**MYTH 3**  
Staying hydrated will prevent heat exhaustion

Staying hydrated is good, but there are still a number of other factors to be considered, such as a golfer's fitness level, age, humidity, the timing and types of fluids consumed during the game. Water alone is not enough to provide optimal hydration; our bodies need a balance of electrolytes, namely potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, sodium and calcium, and 100% natural coconut water is an excellent source of electrolytes. UFC Refresh Coconut Water makes a healthier and convenient choice for natural rehydration as it is 100% natural with no added sugar, additives or preservatives.

**MYTH 4**  
Golfers should not lift weights

Weight lifting is not just for building big muscles or more action-packed sports like rugby or boxing. As the golf swing is a repetitive movement, regular weight lifting can increase golf fitness by strengthening the bones and muscles. This in turn, will help to enhance your flexibility, improving your swing speed and accuracy.

With these myths uncovered, you can now put your mind at ease and focus on getting fit and ready for every game. UFC Refresh 100% Coconut Water is now available onboard SIA Suites and First Class.

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**UFC Refresh**  
Coconut Water  
100% Natural  
Superior Taste Award  
For Better Hydration  
5 Essential Electrolytes  
1000 ml

The Natural Hydration for You