



BY
GODFREY ROBERT

TALENT IN SCHOOLS UNEARTHED AT ORCHID VENUE

SEAN LEADS
THE CHARGE WITH
A SENSATIONAL
EIGHT-UNDER 65
SCORE

Brilliant scores, highlighted by Sean Lee's eight-under 65 on the second day, underlined Singapore's future talent at the National Schools Games Golf Championships at Orchid Country Club early this month.

And when you consider that Lee's sensational return was still not enough to beat Brandon Han for the Boys' B Division title at the Dendro/Vanda courses, you get the drift of how the juniors fared under competitive conditions.

Development Squad (DS) player Sean, from ACS (I), was breathing down the neck of Brandon, but eventually ran short of holes on a scintillating day of supreme golf.

No doubt, everyone thought that it would be a breeze for Brandon, of St Gabriel's School, after his five-under 68 on the first day.

But it was not to be as Sean, who collapsed to a 77 on the first day, turned on the heat from the tee-off. But Brandon warded off the challenge as he shot a 72



SGA president Ross Tan (second row, far right) sharing the victory joy with the National Schools Golf Championships medallists.

to win by two shots.

The championships, held from April 2 to 4 (team competition), was high on drama and passion as Sean led the way with what is said to be a one-day scoring record with his 65.

Any disappointment Sean had felt must have been assuaged when he and his ACS (I) partner Gabriel Yap were deserving winners of the team section with respective five-under and three-under scores on the third day.

Brandon, 16, with a handicap index of plus-0.6, had been practising hard at his home club, NSRCC. The consistent golfer will be representing Singapore in the Junior Open at St Andrew's, Scotland, in July, accompanying Shannon Tan, who qualified for the recent Wom-

en's Amateur Asia-Pacific event at Sentosa Golf Club.

In the Boys' A Division, John Ho of ACS (I) overcame a two-stroke deficit from the first day, to edge out DS player Louis Tee of Singapore Sports School (SSP) after a second-day 68.

The podium finishers in Boys' C Individual competition bore testimony to the progress made by the SGA Junior Squad players as champion Daryl Low (aggregate score 144), first runner-up Ng Wei Jun (152) and second runner-up Irvyn Tan (159) are all squad members.

Not unexpectedly, the Girls' A Division title went to multiple winner and SGA Elite Squad player Callista Chen, with DS player Nicole Mok finishing second to give the Singapore Sports School

a 1-2 finish.

In the Girls' B Division, Hailey Loh (73-73), of Raffles Girls', was a comfortable winner, confirming the belief that her stroke averages had gone down sharply over the past year.

The 16-year-old (handicap index 0.3), who trains at Seletar Country Club, makes up for not-so-long drives with her wedge game and strategic approach shots on course.

She will be representing Singapore in the upcoming Queen Sirikit Cup in Thailand, with Callista and Shannon.

More good scores were returned in the Girls' C Division where all three podium finishers were from the DS/JS squad. Angel Lim, 13, of Nanyang Girls' shot 74 and 69 to win by 14 shots.

SO MUCH OPTIMISM FROM THE OPTIMIST

At a time when junior golf in Singapore needed a boost, the local youngsters delivered.

Singaporeans came out tops in six of the seven divisions in the inaugural 2018 Optimist International Junior Golf Championship at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course to raise smiles among the local golf officials.

With news of courses closing because of infrastructure development, the pipeline to create future stars took a hit with fewer kids taking up the game in a challenging environment where studies take priority.

But the forward-looking and committed Singapore Golf Association officials

are making a conscious effort to stimulate interest among our juniors with programmes and competitions.

In that light, the Singaporeans' overwhelming success at the Optimist event was a shot in the arm for junior golf.

Singapore produced three divisional winners from the SGA Junior Squad and two divisional champions from the SGA Development Squad.

And with the winners and runners-up gaining berths in the Optimist Finals in the United States later this year, there is an impetus for the junior golfers to see some light in the horizon.

Inclement weather made the conditions tough for the 107 participants in

the seven different age-groups, but Justin Kuk and Marcus Lim (Boys' 15-17 years) and Anne Fernandez (Girls' 10-12 years) returned impressive scores to raise the Singapore flag.

So did Angel Lim (Girls' 13-14 years), Daryl Low (Boys' 12-13 years), Sean Lee (Boys' 14-15 years), Rachel Sim and Shayne Lim (Girls' 13-14 years).

Said Lyn Sen, SGA Junior Development Committee chairman: "Seeing our players take the podium so many times, I feel relieved that our efforts to inject some life into junior golf have not gone in vain. We see a future for many of our players."

— Godfrey Robert

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