



BY  
GODFREY ROBERT

IN TIME WITH

  
**ROLEX**

# HAIL HAILEY, THE NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPION

TALENTED TEENAGER RISES TO THE TOP, THANKS TO DAD ARTHUR

en years ago, she trudged along the Raffles Country Club par-three course with clubs much taller than her, clueless to the goings-on beside her. Her dad, Arthur, an avid golfer, was making his daughter's slow introduction to

the game comforted by

sister Ashley, five years older and an ex-national player who is now doing law at the Singapore Management University.

The golfing world was her oyster, although she did know what the future held as she was about to enter primary school, and the thought of academics versus sport haunted her dad.

But she had one thing going for her: parental support in the form of dad Arthur, who saw so much golfing talent in Hailey.

And with care and encouragement, Arthur stood by her over the years, seeing her rise from a 36-handicapper to a plus-0.3 national player.

Last week, Hailey showed her prowess by winning the Singapore National Amateur Championships at Laguna National's Masters course, beating Linette Chua 1-up in a thrilling final.

Said Hailey: "It was my first time playing so many holes over the course of four days. It was very tiring, both mentally and physically. In the final match, I was one down until the 24th hole, which I won to make it all square."

"In the deciding hole, my opponent's approach found the bunker and I was just off the apron right of the green. I knew that if I chipped it near it will put pressure on my opponent."

"My chip stopped one foot away from the hole. Linette then three-putted and conceded the hole and match."

Hailey's game has improved great-

ly recently since she spent a month in the United States this summer and also playing a lot against the Thai girls in Bangkok and around the country.

She has to thank her dad for meticulously charting her course, also having the gumption to pull her out of Raffles Girls School and enrolling her with the Singapore Sports School so that she can enjoy her golf.

Said Arthur, a retiree: "There is a lot more flexibility at the Sports School, which allows Hailey to stay away for even up to a month, and then attend make-up lessons and special tuition by its teachers. So there is a better bal-

ance between sports and studies at the Sports School."

Although he does not know what the future holds for Hailey, Arthur is bent on one thing: Realise Hailey's full potential at golf.

The boys' final was also very close, James Leow edging out Joshua Ho also by a 1-up scoreline in the 36-hole contest.

## RESULTS

### Boys:

- **Q-finals:** Lucius Toh bt Andre Chong 2 and 1, Joshua Ho bt Tommy Tan 1-up, Gregory Foo bt Nicklaus Chiam 2 and 1, James Leow bt Hiroshi Tai 3 and 2.

- **S-finals:** Joshua Ho bt Lucius Toh 5 and 4, James Leow bt Gregory Foo on 20th hole.

- **Final:** James Leow bt Joshua Ho 1-up.
- **3rd place:** Lucius Toh bt Gregory Foo 4 and 2.

### Girls:

- **Q-finals:** Linette Chua bt Goh Jen 1-up, Shannon Tan bt Nicole Mok 2-up, Margaret Fernandez bt Yoko Tai 6 and 5, Hailey Loh bt Inez Ng 7 and 5.

- **S-finals:** Linette Chua bt Shannon Tan 1-up, Hailey Loh bt Margaret Fernandez 3 and 1.

- **Final:** Hailey Loh bt Linette Chua 1-up.
- **3rd place:** Shannon Tan bt Margaret Fernandez 4 and 2.



Hailey Loh and James Leow hold aloft their trophies.

## LAGUNA PLAYS BIG PART IN SGA DRIVE TO BOOST GOLF

At a time when local golf has run into several hazards, the Singapore Golf Association (SGA) is bracing itself to tackle the challenge.

With Raffles Country Club's closure last month and lease terms of several other clubs still in question, the number of facilities has been reduced drastically.

As a consequence, the population of golfers has dwindled – only just over 30,000 have been registered with the Central Handicapping System while anecdotal evidence points to about 55,000 players still active.

That is a drop of about 20,000 from 10 years ago, the stark reality being that the millennials are not taking up the sport as was the practice with youngsters 20 years ago.

With that backdrop looming dark, the SGA is looking for stronger tie-ups with existing clubs, and in that link, Laguna National has stepped up its efforts to be a key player.

Said its CEO and managing director Patrick Bowers: "Laguna National has made it part of our DNA to support, whenever we can, the high-quality initiatives of the SGA.

"We hosted the recent Singapore National Amateur Championships at the Masters course and there was positive feedback about the course conditions and green speed (between 10.5 and 11 on all four days)"

"Also, our view is that Singapore deserves a world-class practice facility the public can experience. So we have a newly-opened range and facilities for chipping and putting.

"We have solidified our instructional component by partnering with David Leadbetter and his renowned academy to be able to offer premium instruction for all levels of players."

Kevin Kwee (inset), executive director of Laguna Resort, added: "As one of the premium private clubs in Singapore, we recognise a responsibility to support the amateur golf initiatives of the SGA as well as contribute to the healthy growth of a positive sport in Singapore."

One area in which the newly-elected SGA committee (now serving a four-year term instead of two) is looking into the development of junior golf.

SGA president Ross Tan, in acknowledging Laguna's commitment, said: "The club not only allows the Elite and Development Squads access but also juniors to use their facilities. The Laguna National six-leg junior series is a big hit."

Tan is also pleased that his incumbents, such as Lyn Sen, Goh Kui Hwa and Lee Lian Hong are still active, and with their support believes that the Engagement Committee, which will organise new initiatives such as the 9-hole and Longest Drive competitions, will stir interest among all levels of golfers.



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