

editor's
letter

BY
BENNY TEO

SERGIO GARCIA WOWS SINGAPORE

Singapore will always be a special place for Sergio Garcia. The famous Spanish golfer celebrated his birthday each of the the previous two times that he came for the SMBC Singapore Open, and this time it was no different.



A personalised Tour360 Birthday Cake for Garcia.

“We (his partner Angela Akins and infant daughter Azalea) celebrated my birthday together last week but it’s very nice for adidas to do this for me. adidas Golf and I been together for 20 years and it’s a very special relationship so that means a lot,” said the 39-year-old during the launch of the brand’s new Tour 360 XT shoes featuring the series’ first spikeless model. “The new shoes feels great. The great thing about adidas is that they never get complacent, even though they make great apparel, they are always pushing themselves, always trying to take one step farther and bring something extra to all the gear that they do,” said the brand loyalist.

This happened during the Tuesday of the tournament week with the then defending champion all smiles as he gamely participated in a cocktail mixing segment with local radio deejay cum golf professional Heng Su-Ann, actress cum former Fox Sports host Natalia Ng and teaching professional Lip Ooi, all ambassadors of adidas Golf.

“It’s great to be back in Singapore defending my title. It’s a golf course that I really like, so hopefully I can have a good start like last year and build up to another great season.” And while he did not win this year, his overall eight-under-par (276) score

was enough to secure him a tie for seventh, boosting his morale as he gears up towards what is going to be a hectic season ahead due to the shortening of the US PGA Tour calendar in 2019.

“You’re not going to be able to rest like you did before but the good thing is that if you get going, get playing well, you can really have a lot of good weeks in a row. So that’s a positive.”

However, he also cautioned, “If you’re not playing as well, hopefully by playing more, you start playing better.”

Judging by the year that has just past, he may have cause for concern, for after winning the Singapore Open, he went winless and missed the cuts at all four Majors until finally securing a second victory at the Andalucia Valderrama Masters in October, an event that he also hosted.

“It was a tough three months from April to July, it was a little bit tougher, but in the beginning of the year it was really good and at the end of the year, it was really good; at the Ryder Cup, winning in Valderrama and having a lot of top-10s to finish the year,” surmised the Spaniard.

While his performance did not justify a call-up to Thomas Bjorn’s Ryder Cup team, the European captain made Garcia his final Captain’s Pick anyway and that turned out to be a revelation in terms of how the former vice-captain rallied his younger teammates towards victory against the Americans.

He also beat Sir Nick Faldo’s record

of 25 points that stood for 21 years by winning his singles match against Rickie Fowler 2&1 to lead the historical race by half a point.

“Ideally, we would like to keep improving on that 25-and-a-half points. It’s a record I’ve never really thought about, until it happened. As much as that event means to me, it’s amazing to be on top of that list and in front of some amazing players.”

Comparing his Ryder Cup record with his maiden victory at Augusta National two years back, he cherishes both but in very different ways.

“The Masters is something more individual, the Ryder Cup (record) is an individual achievement but I had help from my partners, from foursomes and fourballs, so it feels a little more of a group achievement than the Masters, which is just by myself,” he explained.

In terms of the rivalry at the biennial event, his attitude is always towards friendship building across both sides, even though it can be highly competitive.

“Both teams are trying to win for country and continent. But we also play together week in and week out and we’re friends.

“So it’s a competition, it’s an event and we’re both trying to do the best we can but at the end of the day, we’re still friends, we’re still people and we enjoy each other’s company. The Ryder Cup should build friendships not break them and that’s what the event is for me.”



Sergio Garcia poses in the new Tour360 XT.

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