



BY
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FIVE SELECTED FOR ASIAN EVENT HAVE GOOD CHEMISTRY

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WHILE HO HAS AN SMU DEGREE



Clockwise from right; James Leow, Low Wee Jin, Lucius Toh, Wong Qi Wen and Joshua Ho.

Looking at the brief CVs of the five Singapore golfers heading to the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship (AAC) next month, one would not be wrong to think that the quintet have an academic exercise as well to undertake in Shanghai.

For the five are graduates or undergraduates who have perfectly balanced their golf passion with study lessons in a meritocratic environment like that of Singapore.

James Leow, Low Wee Jin, Lucius Toh, Joshua Ho and Wong Qi Wen are not your normal amateur golfers of the past, most of whom rose through the caddie ranks.

But Leow (Arizona State University), Low and Toh (both from the Singapore Institute of Management) and Wong (Duke University) are undergraduates and Ho had just graduated from the Singapore Management University.

The obvious advantage to this positive is that the five better comprehend the instructions behind the complexities of the game with regard to technique, technicalities and club selection.

And there is good chemistry among them because of similar backgrounds and some involvement in group study and knowledge exchange.

Obviously studies will take a backseat in the month ahead for all five are focused on one set mission: that of doing well in the highly-competitive event that brings the best in the Asian continent together for the pursuit of glory from Sept 26 to 29.

The biggest carrot for the almost 100 golfers for this championship is a spot in the US Masters for the winner and the runner-up to be considered for regional events.

Singapore has yet to produce such a winner or runner-up at this event,

a fact that endorses the high quality of the competitors eyeing for global glory.

Last year, when Singapore played hosts to the event at Sentosa Golf Club, the best performer among the locals was current rookie pro Gregory Foo, who finished ninth.

Leow, 23, who finished tied-first in the 2019 Arizona Medallist Inter-Collegiate championship and who last played in the championship in 2015 and 2016 before being enlisted for National Service, said: "It's an honour to play in such an elite and prestigious event organised by the R and A."

"Putting together the best Asia-Pacific player on a PGA Tour venue course and giving the winner an opportunity to play in the Masters and The Open against the top pros in the world will be life-changing."

Low, 26, who won the Selangor Amateur this year and was a member of the triumphant Putra Cup team, said: "It is an amazing event to be part of and it is always a privilege to compete again in the Asia Pacific Championship. This will be my third AAC and I am very excited about playing at the prestigious Sheshan International Golf Club having watched the World Golf Championship that was held there."

Wong, 22, who finished joint-third in the US Amateur Qualifiers, said: "I always look forward to the AAC as it is globally recognised as the top amateur event. The tournament staff conducts this event at a world-class level, and it would be an honour to be part of it while representing my country."

SEA GAMES MEN'S TEAM HAVE SET-TARGET

The stakes are high for the men's team for the South-east Asia Games in the Philippines from Nov 30 to Dec 11.

With the team gold medal still gleaming (surely on their minds), Low Wee Jin, Nicklaus Chiam, Hiroshi Tai and James Leow know that they

already have a set target.

And to remind them of the lofty ambition is Low Wee Jin, a member of the recent victorious Putra Cup team that shocked favourites Thailand to snatch the title.

No doubt, the task is a daunting

one, for all four members of the team that struck gold in 2017 are not competing this time.

But Australian coach Matt Ballard, a wily instructor and sound tactician, has prepared the team well, especially in the intensive sessions at the High

Performance Centre off Bedok Road.

Hailey Loh, a consistent and highly-rated golfer from the Singapore Sports School, leads the women's team. The other members are Ashley Menne and Shannon Tan.

— Godfrey Robert