



BY
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SINGAPORE'S MEN GOLFERS IN BUOYANT MOOD

IT'S all systems go for Singapore's South-east Asian Games golf team.

The homework has been done, the team have been well prepared and the four golfers are in peak condition.

Now the seasoned Nicklaus Chiam, James Leow, Low Wee Jin and Hiroshi Tai will have to deliver in the Philippines from Dec 4 to 8.

And Australian coach Matt Ballard, the architect behind Singapore's double triumph in this year's Putra Cup (Chiam winning the individual event and a member of the victorious team), is quietly confident that the Republic would do well.

He has taken the team on two familiarisation trips to the Philippines and is very familiar with the Lusita Golf and Country Club golf course.

He said: "It is an old Robert Trent Jones-designed course with many large trees guarding every fairway.

"It will favour players who hit the driver straight and preferably with a draw, with over eight tee shots requiring a draw to perfectly hit the fairway.

"It's not an overly long course and some of the short par-fours will reap many birdies. The strength of the course lies in all four par-threes, with water guarding the front of all of them.

"So any mishit iron shots are sure to find the water. Strong iron play will be a factor during Sea Games week and our team boast some very strong iron players, especially

in our men's team."

Although the four players will be making their SEA Games debut, they are not short on international experience.

Chiam, 24, is a senior at Washington State University and has a fabulous 62 as his lowest round.

He has a long drive, is good at putting and intends to "stay in the present" for the biennial Games.

Hiroshi, 17, is a senior at Windermere Prep High School, boasting a lowest round of 64.

Despite being the youngest in the team, he has mental maturity and sound iron play.

Low, 26, is a student at the Singapore Institute of Management and has the lowest round of 65. He is a good all-rounder, thriving in bunker play, iron game and putting.

Leow, 22, is a sophomore at the Arizona State University with the lowest round of 61. He has mental toughness and is adept at the short irons and drives.

Coach Ballard, with the help of high performance manager Joshua Ho, a member of the triumphant 2017 Sea Games team, has been conditioning the boys and devising strategies and golf shots required to navigate the venue.

Singapore will have to contend with arch-rivals Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia for the medals.

The Singapore women's team comprise Shannon Tan, Ashley Menne and Hailey Loh.



From top: Nicklaus Chiam, James Leow, Low Wee Jin and Hiroshi Tai.

NO SCHOOL, BUT IT'S NO HOLIDAY FOR ETHAN, JAYMIE

SINGAPORE'S junior golfers Ethan Lim and Jaymie Ng look forward to the holidays.

But it is no holiday for the duo during that period.

For that is one long period of the year when the duo can step up their golf playing time so that they can achieve their target of playing college golf in the future.

For seven weeks every year, they get the opportunity to push ahead with their playing and training time, even up to seven days a week.

The two golfers are entered for the popular SICC/DBS Junior Golf Championships at the Bukit Course from Dec 2 to 5.

They are among 45 players representing Singapore in the 10-nation

contest which is into its 28th year.

Said Ethan, 13, a student of ACS (Independent): "During the December holidays, there are no worries about homework, skipping school or catching up with studies.

"And I can up my once-or-twice a week training and gym work to seven times a week during his period.

"Golf is so interesting with so many memorable things happening which makes me want to go back to the course".

"College golf in the US or anywhere else is what I want to do."

Jaymie, 14, a student of Crescent Girls School, said: "Being a competitive junior golfer means that I have to manage my time really well. With all the school homework and extra-



Jaymie Ng and Ethan Lim.

curricular activities, in addition to the amount of training hours for golf every week, I have to study and train more efficiently, so that I still have adequate time to rest

"During the school holidays, I try to train every day. I love school holidays because I have more time to practise, I get to play more tournaments both locally and overseas, and I get to gain more experience from playing the different courses

under varying conditions."

She aspires to play sub-80 consistently in every round and to make the cut for every tournament.

"I am focused in trying to win my first tournament, and hopefully get ranked in the World Amateur Golf Rankings next year.

"I also wish to play college golf in the US and, thereafter, pursue my dreams of playing in the LPGA one day."

After a series of events in November, the Singapore juniors have two tournaments in December, namely the SGA Junior Golf Challenge 5th leg at Laguna National on Dec 3 and the HSBC Youth Golf Challenge 2nd leg at NSRCC Kranji from Dec 9 to 11.

Ethan and Jaymie will skip the Laguna event as it clashes with the SICC championships.