



BY
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JAZZ HOLDS COURT WITH SIX-UNDER 65

It was all about Jazz Janewattanond yesterday at Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong course.

The layout that propelled him to the British Open and a few events on the US PGA Tour was yet another playground for the serious Thai.

Last year, he made the US\$1 million SMBC Singapore Open title his own with a scintillating four-day display.

Yesterday, the world No. 38 (below) showed why he is the

favourite – despite marquee names such as Matt Kuchar, Justin Rose and Henrik Stenson hounding him – for the crown yet again.

No doubt, it is still early days with two rounds to go. But with stupendous showing for the day's best round of six-under 65, the lean Thai with a mean game holds a one-shot lead over South Korea's Kim Joo Hyung and Filipino Miguel Tabuena (65), and two over Kuchar and Rose.

Despite an early bogey on the relatively easy-155-metre par-three second hole, he composed himself to string seven birdies with some immaculate putting on a day when many slipped on the "dance floor", especially Stenson who missed at least four easy chances.

Lying two shots adrift of fellow Thai Kosuke Hamamoto after day one,

Jazz turned on the screws from the par-five hole four with a birdie surge that saw him adding birdies on the eighth, ninth, 12th, 13th, 16th and 18th for a 10-under total.

Two fabulous shots on the 542-yard par-five 18th ensured his pole position as he found the green, almost 20 feet from the hole, sparking flightmates Rose and Ryo Ishikawa to also make birdies.

Kim amassed five birdies on an unsoiled card while world No. 9 Rose rued the first hole with a bogey but bounced back with birdies on the second, fourth, 12th, 15th, 16th and 18th, a driver and five-iron putting him in eagle position on the final hole.

World No. 24 Kuchar had an afternoon off with his early round, enough time to ponder a mixed bag with a disastrous double-bogey and two bogeys as he enjoyed birdies on his final three holes for a 68.

Only three Singaporeans made the cut, with Koh Dengshan (71-72) and amateurs James Leow (70-73) and Low Wee Jin (70-73) on tied 51st.

Overnight leader Kosuke Hamamoto of Thailand fell back to tied-23rd after 75.



PRAYAD, THREE OTHER FORMER CHAMPS BOW OUT

Two years ago on the same course on a January Sunday, Prayad Marksaeng was hailed.

And hounded.

He had just won the SMBC Singapore Open at Sentosa's Serapong course with a nine-under total 275, a stroke ahead of four players.

But it was a different story yesterday for the 53-year-old celebrated Thai veteran.

After the second day's play in the same surroundings, he was a forgotten figure, mostly seen walking with four or five friends before he made his exit from the 2020 SMBC Singapore Open.

So also making meek exits were three other former champions, India's Jeev Milkha Singh, 48, winner in 2007 also at Serapong, Jyoti Randhawa, 47, champion in 2000, and Zaw Moe, 52, top finisher in 1997, as the Young Turks proved too much of a challenge for the four veterans.

Golf can be a cruel game, no doubt.



LOCALS IN THE LIMELIGHT

The Singapore Open, backed respectively by Barclays Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation over the last 15 years, had the best local flavour and prominence.

In fact, since the national Open was inaugurated in 1961, local professionals had never received so much limelight.

A record 13-strong (10 professionals and three amateurs) field aside, buntings featuring Singapore players Quincy Quek, Choo Tze Huang and SEA Games gold medallist James Leow had been placed around the city and on Artillery Avenue and Gateway Avenue leading to Sentosa Golf Club, the venue for the event since 2005.

It was also good to see Choo being chauffeured in a Porsche, and Quek driving a sponsored Audi to the tournament.

TAYLORMADE'S NEW SIM A MUST FOR GOLFERS

EQUIPMENT BRAND LAUNCHES FABULOUS LINE-UP TO IMPROVE 'YOUR GAME'

BY JEREMY THESEIRA

Leading golf equipment manufacturer TaylorMade, in conjunction with MST Golf, launched the all-new SIM (Shape In Motion) family in Kuala Lumpur last Tuesday.

The family includes new drivers, fairways, a hybrid and irons.

David Abeles, president and chief executive officer of TaylorMade Golf unveiled the new clubs for the year at the regional launch in the Malaysian capital.

Marking the end of the highly successful M series, the new SIM drivers feature a redesigned head shape that increases aerodynamics and club head speed, making it the fastest and most forgiving driver in the history of the brand.

Across the three variations, –

the SIM, SIM Max and SIM MaxD – the drivers feature a raised crown and sole to reduce drag and improve airflow, particularly at the final, and most important point of the swing just a metre before impact where club head speed accelerates drastically.

The SIM drivers also incorporate proprietary technology which has been seen in previous TaylorMade drivers such as the Speed Injected Twist Face and the Thru-Slot Speed Pocket.

While all three drivers feature the adjustable loft sleeve, the SIM is the only driver in the series with Sliding Weight technology and a midsize face.

The SIM Max features a face that is 8 per cent larger than the SIM while the SIM MaxD, with its draw biased design, has a face that is 18 per cent larger.

Along with the drivers, the



David Abeles speaking at the TaylorMade New Product Launch in Kuala Lumpur.

SIM line-up includes new fairway woods that reintroduce their iconic V Steel design, a ZATECH Titanium face and adjustable loft sleeve in the same three variations as the driver.

Rounding up the SIM line-up is the SIM Max Rescue, the first hybrid in the brand's history to incorporate their V Steel Technology, as well as the SIM Max and SIM Max OS irons which feature the Speed Bridge technology with

an all-new ECHO® Damping System to deliver a forged-like feel with speed, forgiveness, and great sound to boot.

"Our engineers and product teams worked so hard to build this driver for many years to get to a place where we can change the shape and form a new construction that will serve us well for many years in the future," said Abeles on how improved is the new SIM driver.

He added, "What gets me the most excited about Shape In Motion, across metal works and irons is that we're going to make a lot of golfers happy, playing the game better and seeing advanced performance in the things that matter to them."

The new SIM line-up is available at MST stores islandwide.

