

Tough times call for flexible arrangements.

In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic which has thrown the schedules for the Asian Tour and Asian Development Tour in disarray, Singapore professional golfers are going through a difficult patch.

They have been sidelined for almost six months now with no competitions because of the playing restrictions and safety measures to combat the pandemic.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Singapore Professional Golfers' Association (SPGA) held its virtual annual meeting a fortnight ago, and the same faces were re-elected.

M Murugiah extended his presidency to just beyond 12 years, and familiar names Chang Ren Chiat (vice-president), Jack Solomon (secretary) and Nasarudin Alias (treasurer) were also returned unopposed.

Murugiah, 56, who runs his own teaching academy at the Warren Golf and Country Club and was first elected SPGA president in 2008, is aware of his fellow-profes-

BY GODFREY ROBERT

PLAYING PROS TAKE TO PART-TIME TEACHING DURING BARREN SPELL



SPGA president M. Murugiah (left) and Singapore's leading golfer Mardan Mamat.

sionals' predicament and is looking into helping them in their careers.

He has encouraged Singapore's leading professional Mardan Mamat and rookie pro Marc Ong to do teaching at his academy on a part-time basis while they keep their playing touch with rounds mostly at the Choa

Chu Kang layout.

Another leading pro Quincy Quek, who used to be a regular at the China PGA Tour Series, is also feeling the effects of being grounded. However, he teaches twice a week at the golfinglab at National Service Resort and Country Club in Changi while spending most of the

time looking after his second-born, a boy (five months old) and attending to his three-year-old daughter.

Quek is happy that his sponsors, namely Audi, and equipment and apparel companies such as TaylorMade, Titleist, Fenix, Adidas golf and Oakley have stayed with him.

Two other notable professionals, Koh Dengshan and Choo Tze Huang continue to play and practise at least five times a week in the hope that competitions will resume early next year. The duo have secured a money (undisclosed) sponsor in two businessmen James Koh and Kelvin Chng.

Koh is co-owner of watch company Chrono95 and

Chng is founder and adviser of Fintech Alliance Global.

With venues such as clubs in Johor, Batam and Bintan not permitted to accommodate Singaporeans and most local clubs feeling the pressure of allowing playing privileges only to members, the SPGA is struggling to find a venue to keep their professionals engaged in the game.

Added to that is the strict application of safety measures, like safe distancing and avoidance of crowd congregation, which calls for proper discipline among players if a tournament is to be held.

The SPGA, however, is hoping to get clearance from SportsSG to stage an event soon under strict guidelines.

— GODFREY ROBERT

tried & tested

BY JEREMY THESEIRA



A LITTLE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD

Well not exactly, but close. The Voice Caddie VC4 is a minimalistic GPS rangefinder that conveniently clips to a hat's brim or belt.

The latest version of the voice-guided rangefinder calculates and provides auditory readouts of the distance to the front, middle and back of the green, as well as elevation changes.

To do this, the VC4 pinpoints a golfer's location on the course using GPS and matches it to pre-loaded course data.

Except for a few, data for Singapore golf courses is available among the 40,000 worldwide courses in Voice Caddie's database.

It also has the ability to calculate shot and carry distance, but golfers will need to locate their ball to use this feature. Out of bounds is out of the question.

The high capacity battery within the 28.5-gram device will last for up to 54 holes, surpassing the abilities of a casual golfer in a typical day out on the course.

If the battery level is low, the VC4 calculates the remaining holes of the round and kicks into a power-saving mode to last through to the end of the game.

While the VC4 might not be as accurate or detailed as a laser rangefinder, the clip-on device is relatively smaller, cheaper and packed with essential features that are ideal for casual players.

• The Voice Caddie VC4 is priced at \$219 and is available at MST Golf stores islandwide.

NEW CLUBS FROM PING

PING recently launched the G425 family which consists of three new driver models, as well as fairway woods, hybrids and irons.

• Drivers

The G425 Max is the primary model of the series, along with the LST (Low Spin Technology) and SFT (Straight Flight Technology).

The most forgiving of the lot, the Max features the highest Moment of Inertia (MOI) with a light 460cc head and 26-gram tungsten movable weight that shifts the centre of gravity (CG) lower and further back.

The tungsten weight can be secured in three settings – neutral, draw or fade – to tweak forgiveness and improve shot shaping. Regardless of the setting, the Max boasts a 14 per cent MOI increase over last year's G410 Plus.

The LST sports a smaller 445cc pear-shaped head that reduces ball spin by up to 700 rotations per minute compared to the Max, as well as a 17-gram CG shifter with a draw, neutral and fade setting to fit a golfer's swing and desired ball flight.

Lastly, the draw-biased SFT features a 460cc head with a

fixed 23-gram tungsten weight that shifts the CG closer to the heel, producing a right-to-left correction of approximately 23 metres compared to the Max.

• Fairway woods and hybrids

The new G425 fairway woods and hybrids feature a thin, high-strength maraging steel face that extends into the crown and sole. The "Face-wrap" design produces increased flex for faster ball speeds that result in greater distance and high launching shots.

Both clubs are also more forgiving with low face miss-hits thanks to its "Spinsistency" face curvature that modifies the roll profile. This decreases low face loft by approximately 2.5 degrees to normalise spin and increase ball speed.

A tungsten weight at the rear of the sole increases MOI for added forgiveness. On the crown, a new 3-dot alignment feature provides golfers with a visual aid to

consistently address the ball at the right position.

• Irons

The G425 irons feature a new metal wood-style, variable face thickness design that increases flex to produce higher ball speeds and launch shots.

The compact head shape has a comparatively shorter heel-to-toe length over the G410 irons yet a 3 per cent increase in MOI with its reduced weight.

Similar in design, the G425 Crossover long irons feature a thinner face, hollow body construction, and weights on the toe and hosel to increase MOI and forgiveness.

• The new PING G425 family is available for custom fitting at Wingolf outlets.



photos: Warren Golf and Country Club (above)