

BY GODFREY ROBERT S'PORE JUNIORS IN THE GROOVE IN KL EVENT

THEY BEAT MALAYSIAN COUNTERPARTS IN INAUGURAL CAUSEWAY CUBS' CHALLENGE

The push for junior golf was always high on the agenda for the newly-appointed Singapore Golf Association committee when they took office almost two years ago.

Junior clinics, age-group tournaments and kids' exposure through novelty games to big competitions such as the SMBC Singapore Open and the HSBC Women's World Championships were events that the SGA junior development committee, under the stewardship of Lyn Sen, had undertaken over the past 18 months.

The committee's involvement and undertaking to these events proved fruitful when the Singapore juniors (aged 11 to 15) beat their Malaysian counterparts in the inaugural Causeway Cubs' Challenge at the Royal Selangor Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur recently.

UP THEIR GAME

Exposure to regional junior tournaments and the HSBC Youth League recently helped Singapore's juniors to up their game and lower their handicaps as the in-form team beat Malaysia 16.5 to 11.5 in the three-day match.

Showing the way were the two captains, Brandon Han and Inez Ng, who both won their singles games on the third day.

Brandon, partnering Brayden Lee, also won his fourball boys' match while Inez remained unbeaten as she partnered Shayne Lim in the fourballs and Shannon Tan in the foursomes to halve their girls' doubles matches.

Another youngster to impress was Angel Lim, the 12-year-old daughter of former leading Singapore pro and expresident of the Singapore Professional Golfers' Association Lim Kian Kee.

Lim, who teaches at the Marina Bay Golf Course, has been instrumental in grooming his petite daughter since the age of four into a player with huge potential.

The three-handicap index Angel, who is just shy of five feet in height, is capable of driving an impressive 200 metres and Lim puts it down to her smooth

swing and good clubhead speed.

Angel (with Jillian Kuk as her partner) won her fourball match and halved her foursomes before beating Foong Zi Yu in the singles match for a major contribution to the team's total.

Leading by a point after the fourball and foursome matches (7.5 to 6.5), Singapore turned on the heat in the deciding singles matches, winning 9-5. Inez, Brandon and Angel aside, Singapore's singles victories came from Shayne Lim, Shannon Tan, Jillian Kuk, Sean Lee and Daryll Low while Irvin Tan and Brayden Lee halved their matches.

ASTOUNDING

Said SGA's Junior Development Committee chairman Lyn Sen, who also accompanied the team: "The quality of golf by both teams was astounding. Angel Lim needed five birdies in 16 holes to close out her singles match.

"Many of our kids had to play remarkably well to secure their wins. This is what representing the country does. It brings out a new level of desire and pride to perform at one's best. I am excited at the potential of our young squad and we're already planning for the next challenge with another golf association."



SGA AND SLGA JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE GOLF

There is a greater symbiotic relationship between the Singapore Golf Association and the Singapore Ladies Golf Association.

And this collaboration will be mutually beneficial to events staged by both associations.

Take the recent Women's Amateur Asia Pacific championship staged at the Sentosa Golf Club's New Tanjong course.

It was an SGA event solely catered to women amateurs. But with the involvement of committee members from the SLGA, the event turned out to be an overwhelming success.

The winner, Thai Atthaya Thitikul, was chosen to take part in the HSBC Women's Championships the following week and the forthcoming Women's British Open and the ANA Inspiration.

The close-knit relationship was recognised as pivotal by the world governing golf body Royal & Ancient and the Asia Pacific Golf Confederation.

The new level of partnership between the SGA and SLGA is also to streamline the activities of the two bodies as they work together to promote the game in Singapore.

As a start, SGA president Ross Tan (top) and SGA Junior Development Committee chairman Lyn Sen have initiated a series of junior events, which this week's International Junior Golf Championship Qualifiers 2018, is a part of.

Apart from last month's Asia Pacific women's event, the SGA will stage the men's version later this year, and all eyes will be on Singapore's top amateur Gregory Foo.

— Godfrey Robert

photo by Singapore Golf Association



Singapore's winning junior team, with officials Lyn Sen (fourth from right, standing), Jerome Ng (third from right, standing), Nicole Thew (second from right, standing) and Darryl Thomas (extreme left, standing).