



BY  
GODFREY ROBERT

## S'PORE JUNIOR C'SHIP RETURNS TO KEPPEL CLUB

DESPITE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT EXISTENCE, HISTORIC CLUB IS KEEN TO PROMOTE JUNIOR GOLF



Junior golfers show their enthusiasm at an event at Keppel Club.

Keppel Club boasts a history and heritage like no

other club in Singapore.

Founded in 1904 and named after British Royal Navy officer Sir Henry Keppel, who arrived in Singapore in 1832, the popular club has an illustrious past and distinguished present.

But the future of Singapore's oldest golf club is shrouded in mystery with its lease expiring in 2021, and speculation is rife with tales of the prominent club being linked with other clubs so as to provide it a lifeline.

There is talk that Keppel Club could form a partnership with Changi Golf Club and allow its members, mainly golfing personnel, a new lease of life.

However, over the past month, there has been serious conversations about Keppel buying up one of the courses (probably the Classic layout) from Laguna National Golf and Country Club which has been snowed under by some weighty issues.

With Laguna's current lease due to expire in 2021, Debenture holders with maturity certificates are asking for their monies and many golf

ing members seem not prepared to cough up the "extras" for the lease extension.

And although Laguna's new hotel is expected to be ready by year-end, the anticipated drop in membership could force the club to sell one of its courses for a reported \$100 million.

Laguna's executive director Kevin Kwee said: "Yes, we have been in talks with Keppel. Any decision taken should be a win-win for both clubs. Let's wait and see."

Despite the uncertainty and swirling rumours, Keppel has remained undistracted but steadfast in its vision and beliefs.

Most certainly in its corporate social responsibility (CSR) for which it has worked closely with the Singapore Golf Association (SGA) on some programmes.

In conjunction with the SGA, Keppel will bring back the Singapore Junior Golf Championship to its premises from June 24 to 27, also with a 9-hole walkathon.

Keppel first hosted the junior event in 2005 following the completion of a major renovation and a celebration of its centennial year in 2004.

The club hosted the event for 11 consecutive years until 2015 before passing the baton on to other clubs

for the next three years.

The SGA has found Keppel to be an ideal venue for the return of the event not only because the club has had a strong junior development programme but also that it has the organisational capability to stage the premier junior event.

Keppel members have also given their blessings for the event because they feel it is their property.

To provide a boost to the event, Keppel will stage a pre-event Keppel Junior Invitational on June 18 and 19 and a post-event, the Keppel 9-hole walkathon on June 28.

For the 9-hole walkathon, golfers pay \$25 each and the proceeds will go to the Diabetes Association.

The club hopes that through these additional events (fringe activities have also been lined up) it can reach out to the greater community in support of the SGA's effort to promote good health through golf.

The programme will be run by Hwa Chong and Dunearn High students on that day to promote awareness of Diabetes with an underlying message about the importance of cardio-vascular activities.

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— LAGUNA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEVIN KWEE

### BOOTCAMP TRAINING ABROAD FOR 26 JUNIORS

Twenty six local amateur golfers will experience a professional approach to the game when they embark on two National Training Camps next month.

In bootcamp-like fashion, the two groups of junior golfers, aged 12 to 17, will "eat, sleep and breathe" golf for at least 16 hours a day.

Fourteen juniors from the National and Development squads will spend five days (June 1 to 5) at the sprawling Mission Hills Golf and Country Club in Haikou, Hainan, on a focused training camp.

The juniors are Andre Chong, Angel Lim, Brandon Han, Daryl Low, Justin Kuk, Low Wee Jin, Lucius Toh, Donovan Lee, Aidil Nor Amani, Jillian Kuk, Nicklaus Chiam, Nicole Mok, Shayne Lim and Nathen Tan.

They will focus on the various aspects of golf, from practice, play, discussion and post-mortem.

In addition, they will do gym work under the guidance of renowned trainer Charles Davies and also spend time with specialist physio Calvin Goh.

Another group from the National Junior Squad will spend three days (June 6 to 8) at the Els Club in Desaru, Malaysia, on a similar programme.

The 12 golfers are: Brayden Lee, Ethan Lim, Giovanni Goh, Gwen Tan, Irvyn Tan, Jayden Loh, Jaymie Ng, Rachel Sim, Ryan Ng, Tatiana Ang, Trevor Ng and Yap Zhe Rong.

Both groups will be supervised by national coach Matt Ballard who has mapped out a comprehensive programme for them. — Godfrey Robert