

Teo confident of making it to Durban Finals

By **David Lee**

With a solid round of 76 at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong Course, Teo Choon Hoe finished six strokes ahead of his closest competitor from Division D in the first of two qualifying rounds of the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) World Golfers Championship (WGC) on Tuesday.

As a result, the 44-year-old businessman — along with 39 other golfers — is through to the SPH WGC Finals that take place at Sentosa's Serapong Course on Oct 7.

The winners of the tournament's five handicap divisions — A (0-5.4), B (5.5-10.4), C (10.5-15.4), D (15.5-20.4) and E (20.5-25.4) — will represent Singapore at the WGC Finals in Durban, South Africa, from Nov 1 to 8.

They will be coached by top local instructor M Balraj before travelling.

But if Teo, a 16.6-handicap index player, keeps up his red-hot form, he could have his handicap cut and get bumped up a couple of divisions.

Not that it would bother him.

"I want to cut down my handicap actually," he told The New Paper.

"Put me in Division A or B, I don't think that would be a problem. I think I can shoot some decent scores at Serapong if we play off the white tees again.

"I usually play off the blue tees and my best rounds at Serapong are in the 70s, so playing off the white tees is short for me.

"I definitely hope to do well enough to win the final and qualify for South Africa."

Even though they are amateur golfers, those who have qualified for the Oct 7 final are as competitive as professionals, with the grand prize and prestige at stake.

Sam Peck, a 43-year-old businessman who also shot a 76 to top Division B on Tuesday, said: "Of course I'm taking part to win. If not, I won't even join this competition.



WARMING UP: Local amateur golfers on the practice green at Sentosa at the Singapore Press Holdings World Golfers Championship.

"I didn't three-putt at all on Tuesday, so I hope to keep up this putting form in the final."

The next qualifying round is at Tanjong on Monday.

In each of the two qualifying rounds, the top player from each division goes through to the final.

As some divisions had more players than others, the top 40 per cent from each division were selected to make the final.

ROUND ONE QUALIFIERS*:

DIVISION A (0 - 5.4)
Timothy Ding (78)

DIVISION B (5.5 - 10.4)
Sam Peck (76), Tan Lee Hong (79), Kris Poniman (80), Chua Poh Yong (80)
Derrick Tay (81), Tai Kok Lai (81), Leverett Chua (82), James Fu (82).

DIVISION C (10.5 - 15.4)
Chan Wai Leong (81), Gan Hua Feng (81), Brian Chen (82), Darren Ware (82), Se Kim Chye (82), Vincent Ee (83), Ko Yeo (83), Oh Kian Kiau (83), Bobby Bong (85), Jessie Tan (85), Shannon Ng (86), Ron Pang (87), Ju Kai Meng (87).

DIVISION D (15.5 - 20.4)
Teo Choon Hoe (76), Lee Kian (82), Soh Soon Kai (86), Peter Tan (87), Tan Horng Chiang (88), Rick Varatharaju (89), Lim Tengsay (91), Aik Sing Yeow (92), Karen Teo (92), Ernst Huber (93), Oh Ming Choo (94), Chew Hai Chwee (94).

DIVISION E (20.5 - 25.4)
David Seow (87), Chew Meng Hui (95), Loh Kum Chuen (96), Mak Weng Tat (97).

Note: The organisers are still checking on the validity of two handicaps submitted.

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TNP photo by Aaron Eng

A Hole-In-One start for the tournament

The odds of an amateur golfer registering a hole-in-one is said to be 12,750 to one.

Yet, there was an ace in the inaugural Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) World Golfers Championship (WGC) at Sentosa Golf Club earlier this week. At the opening qualifying game on Tuesday, 53-year-old Andrew Lim surprised even himself when he holed his shot at the 116-metre fifth hole of the Tanjong course. As the green is on an elevated ground, golfers would not be able to see where their balls land on the green.

An event organiser himself, Mr Lim's first thought was his ball had gone missing when he could not find it.

He said: "It was an uphill par-three.

I hit a good shot with a seven-iron."

The 14.1 handicap index player added: "But my flightmates and I spent about five minutes to search for the ball and we couldn't find it.

"One of them suggested we look into the cup, and true enough there it was. "I couldn't believe it."

Mr Lim's regret was that his rare feat — the only one of the day — was not achieved at either of the two pre-designated par-three holes that carried mega prizes for a hole-in-one. Golfers stand to win a Lotus Evora courtesy of Richburg Motors if they could get a hole-in-one at the designated Richburg hole, or a Switzerland holiday package courtesy of Dynasty Travel if they managed it at

the Dynasty hole.

Another setback - his overall score of 94 was not good enough to beat other golfers to advance to the final on Oct 7.

However as golf is a game that exemplifies sportsmanship and camaraderie, the organisers of the SPH WGC will be inviting Mr Lim as a special guest to play a social round at the Serapong course. Not only that, he will be receiving a surprise gift at the gala dinner for his hole-in-one feat.

Tuesday's competition was the first of two qualifying rounds — the next round is at Tanjong on Monday — and the top 40 players from each round will advance to the final at Sentosa's Serapong Course on Oct 7.

The winners of the tournament's five handicap divisions — A (0-5.4), B (5.5-10.4), C (10.5-15.4), D (15.5-20.4) and E (20.5-25.4) — will represent Singapore at the WGC Finals in Durban, South Africa, from Nov 1-8. They will be coached by top local instructor M Balraj before travelling.

One young golfer who put himself in contention is 15-year-old Timothy Ding, a 4.8-handicapper who shot a fine round of 78 in his first round of golf at Tanjong to finish top of his division yesterday.

The Anglo-Chinese School (International) student, who made one birdie and 10 pars, said: "I hit almost every fairway but missed quite a lot of putts.

"I joined this event mainly for experience as it's the first time I'm competing against adults, and I wanted to see how I would do. With this score, I hope to be able to do well enough in the final to win the chance to represent Singapore in the WGC Finals."

The leaders of the other categories are Sam Peck (76, Division B), Chan Wai Leong (81 ocb, Division C), Teo Choon Hoe (76, Division D) and David Seow (87, Division E).

Mr Lim said: "Overall, the greens were very fast for us but it was a fun, enjoyable and well-organised event."

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