



Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Ng Chee Meng (seated, second from right) with officials on the VIP table at Sentosa Golf Club.

BY GODFREY ROBERT

SGA RAISES \$475,400 FOR ITS YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

MOST MONIES WILL GO TO HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME AND JUNIOR ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE PRODUCED RESOUNDING RESULTS

A Singapore Golf Association (SGA) video that was both chest-thumping and heart-rending received a vote of sincere approval from almost 160 diners at Sentosa Golf Club last week.

And among them were generous sponsors, namely platinum sponsors James Koh and Kelvin Chng, who were moved with emotion and patriotism as the video showcased Singapore's golfing successes over recent years and SGA's role in community engagement.

Wild applause greeted the sight of the victorious SEA Games team of 2017 that won the gold medal in Kuala Lumpur.

So too, when James Leow sank the final putt to claim the SEA Games individual gold medal after 30 years for Singapore in the Philippines last month, both triumphs underlining that the region's powerhouses, Thailand, are beatable.

Photographs of beaming local junior players winning regional age-group events further struck the patriotism chord, especially when the Singapore flag was hoisted at these tournaments.

Community engagements, like the Discover Golf Carnival, underscore that the sport of golf is no more elitist but accessible to all ensured that junior playing numbers rise marginally so that the pool remained competitive.

After an exciting day of golf to mark the annual SGA Fundraiser, which had Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Ng Chee Meng as guest-of-honour, the diners were treated to a delectable dinner and an array of prizes.

The amount of money raised was



Kids enjoying themselves at the Discover Golf Carnival.

\$240,200, and with a One Team Singapore Fund (OTSF) Matching Grant of \$235,200, the total raised for SGA's activities for the year was \$475,400.

SGA Board member and organising chairman Tan Chong Huat, after thanking Mr Ng and the sponsors, said: "Golf is a beautiful game that educates the youth with great values such as honesty, integrity and respect."

"The monies raised will go a long way to aid our High Performance Programme and junior development initiatives."

"The High Performance Programme, spearheaded by national coach Matt Ballard helped in our SEA Games victories and also the South-east Asian Amateur Golf Team Championship (Putra Cup) last year."

The High Performance Programme aside, the SGA also has a Rookie Professional Programme which supports Singapore's elite national players at the beginning of their professional careers financially as well as providing them with world-class facilities such as

the High Performance Training Centre with a full-length professional driving range and short-game practice facilities.

The centre also includes a training room which comprise the office of the National Coach, a contemporary gym and a study area, all made possible with the strong support of Laguna National Golf and Country Club for generously welcoming SGA's squads to have a training base and home.

The activities and the work SGA does strive to support its golfers to chase their Olympic dreams and achieve personal excellence both on and off the course.

SGA president Ross Tan said: "The support from the golf clubs and community has been overwhelming in the past few years. I would also like specially express our sincere appreciation to Laguna National Golf and Country Club for their tireless support in our High Performance Programme."

"With the continued support from all, we strive to continue our quest to grow the game of golf in Singapore."



RYDER CUP IS PHIL'S FOCUS, NOT SENIOR TOUR

Phil Mickelson will be eligible for the PGA Tour's senior circuit this year but the five-time Major champion said this week that he has not given it much thought and is focused instead on making the US Ryder Cup team.

Mickelson (above), who turns 50 in June, feels that a decision he made years ago to have a greater work ethic and commitment to physical health has left him in no rush to tee it up on the PGA Tour Champions with players he idolised as a child.

"It's nice to have the option to move over to another Tour, but it's also nice to have the challenge of competing out here," Mickelson said in La Quinta, California.

"And I don't often voice too many goals, but one of them is to make the Ryder Cup, it should be a pretty obvious goal so I need to play enough tournaments out here and play well to be able to achieve that particular goal."

In 20 PGA Tour events last season, the left-hander made the cut 12 times and had two top-10 finishes, including a three-shot victory at the Pebble Beach Pro-Am in February.

Apart from aiming for his first Major title since the 2013 British Open, Mickelson is eager to earn a spot on Steve Stricker's US squad for the Sept. 25-27 Ryder Cup against Europe at Whistling Straits in Wisconsin.

Mickelson was one of four of Jim Furyk's captain's picks for the 2018 edition of the biennial event and he had a 0-2 record as Europe regained the Ryder Cup.

His overall Ryder Cup record is far from spectacular, having won only 18 of his 47 matches in 12 appearances, but he said he had let Stricker know how badly he wants to be on this year's team.

He does not, however, want to get on by virtue of being a captain's pick.

"If I play to the level that I believe I'm capable of I'll make the team. But if not, you've got to give those spots to some younger guys that haven't had the chance to play and compete the way I have," said Mickelson.

"So I have six, eight months to get it done," he added. — REUTERS