

BY GODFREY ROBERT QUEK BELIEVES HIS BIG BREAK **AT PRO GOLF WILL COME**

The mid-day sun was at full blast, but a light breeze brought some cool comfort to his sweat-dripped body. Quincy Quek was going through a monotonous but must-do routine at the National Service Resort & Country Club's (NSRCC) Changi course practice green recently.

Ten white tees looked so prominent near a hole as Quek practised his short putting from eight feet, the golf ball slipping through tees and finding its way into the hole from a right-left downhill read.

While there I saw Quek miss just twice from 20 attempts, both times the ball lipping the cup and straying slightly.

Quek, 31, remained nonchalant, displaying a calm disposition that translated, could read satisfaction. And then he asked: "Can we do the interview here?"

Obviously, he wanted to continue working to perfection on what he said was his weak area, as he reminded me that putting lapses had cost him making so many cuts in his nine years as a professional golfer.

But he acceded to my request for a clubhouse interview when I told him that I wanted to get an insight into a precocious popular golfer who forsook his university education to pursue a sport that has brought him as much excitement as exasperation.

He was a national schools swimmer when at ACS Junior, excelling at the freestyle and backstroke events. But when 10, close friends of his dad Peter, who was also a top swimmer during schooldays (SJ), convinced Quek to switch to golf.

And after some brief range work and a few rounds at the Green Fairways, encouraged by his dad and three golfing buddies – Yeo Chuen Eng, Henry Tan and Goh Chye Lee – Quek braved himself to go for the handicap test at NSRCC Changi.

"I was almost 11 then, and my dad bought me a Mizuno ladies' set and put me through the handicap test. For five holes we had to shoot 10 over, and at the (former) Navy course, I was 10-over going into the last hole, a long par-five.

"After two shots I was facing water before the green, and I knew that I could not get over. So I laid up, chipped onto the green and sank a difficult long putt. That par sealed my handicap card."

From then on, while at secondary level at ACS Independent, Quek's handicap dropped drastically from 24 to 17 and then 11 in Secondary One, to single digit in Secondary Two, after which he made the national team.

And then from a stellar amateur career, the main highlights of which was the prestigious Putra Cup title in 2008 and the phenomenal WWExpress Philippine Amateur Open crown in 2009, Quek turned pro on April 27, 2009, a day after his release from National Service.

It has been a long and arduous journey then, occasionally haunted by his decision to forego tertiary ad-



**AUDI AMBASSADOR
AND BT LEAGUE SUPPORTER
HAS STRONG ABILITY AND
RIGHT APPLICATION TO
HIT IT RIGHT**

'I PREFER THE TALLER RIDE OF AN SUV, AND DRIVING THE Q5 DEFINITELY PROVIDES THAT. BUT WHAT SETS THE Q5 APART FROM ANY OTHER SUVS IS ITS QUATTRO TECHNOLOGY. I FIND THE Q5 TO BE VERY RESPONSIVE TO THE THROTTLE, BUT NOT TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS DIFFICULT TO HANDLE. EVEN WHEN IT'S FULL LOADED WITH MY CLUBS AND OLLIE'S DIAPERS, THE CAR DOES NOT LACK ANY POWER AT ALL. IT MAKES ME FEEL A LOT SAFER ON THE ROADS, ESPECIALLY WHEN I HAVE MY 18-MONTH-OLD BABY GIRL IN THE BACK SEAT.'

mission for a business degree at the Singapore Management University to make a career in golf.

"Yes, there are times when I compare myself with my peers, many of whom have graduated and hold steady decent-paying jobs. And I begin to wonder whether I made the right decision to pursue a pro golfing career.

"No doubt, it has been tough, especially missing cuts by just one stroke because the putts won't fall or finishing way down the line for paltry purses sometimes not enough to cover my expenses.

"But the important thing is that I enjoy what I'm doing, and am hoping for a big break that should spur me to greater things. For pro golfers, we encounter inner demons, and we have to get rid of them."

Quek's biggest purse has been the US\$36,000-plus money he won when finishing fourth at an Asian Tour event (2014 Indonesian Open). And he is comforted by the fact that if he could do it once, he could strike again. "My time will come," he beamed with confidence, one derived from his own talent, ability and application.

And he works hard at his game, with a weekly schedule of driving range sessions, chipping and putting routines, and the occasional gym work. In between, during tournament breaks, the lean six-footer plays nine or 18-hole games with other local pros either here at NSRCC Changi or the nearby Tanah

Merah Country Club.

With a 94th finish on the Asian Tour Order of Merit last year, Quek gets invitations to smaller events on the Tour. And armed with a Qualifying School spot on the PGA Tour China, he plies his trade on many Chinese cities with up to 14 possible events this year.

"Sponsorships are hard to come by for Singapore pros," adds Quek, who is happy that he is an ambassador with Audi. The German car company avails him its range of cars during local events.

The typical family man who dotes on his 18-month-old daughter, Olivia, with his recruiter wife, Celine, also enjoys sponsorship from Fenix XCell apparel, TaylorMade (clubs), Titleist (golf balls) Oakley (shades) and Picabo Optics (contact lens).

Whenever he is in town, he avails himself for The Business Times Corporate League when he conducts lessons for the participants, both in demonstrations and with games.

This is a commitment he has been keeping for the last seven years - also at the annual Audi Quattro Cup - because he enjoys a great partnership with the car company, especially its managing director Jeff Manering.

"I see Audi, the presenting sponsor of the BT League, and the event itself have a great symbiotic relationship that has thrived over the years. I am happy to play my small part in it," he stressed.



AUDI Q5 SPECIFICATIONS & FEATURES

Model name: Audi Q5 2.0 TFSI quattro S tronic

Engine: 1984cc, in-line 4, turbocharged

Power: 252hp; **Torque:** 370Nm

Top speed: 237km/h; **0-100km/h:** 6.3s

Consumption: 8.3L/100km; **Price:** \$239,080 inclusive of COE

Features:

- Audi virtual cockpit ● quattro with ultra technology
- MMI Navigation Plus with MMI touch ● Rear seat bench plus