editor's **letter**

BY S. MURALI

IN TIME WITH
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WORLD BEATERS AND A NEW PASSPORT OF OPPORTUNITY

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.
–MICHAEL JORDAN

(From far left) Team Singapore golfers Lee Kian, Colin Tan, Clara Ang, Melvin Choo and Erwyn Lam.

TNP photo by Jacqueline Wu

World champions.

In the domain of team sports, nothing sounds better than those two words. And in the world of amateur team golf, Singapore are now reigning world champions.

In case you missed the amazing news, this happened last month in South Africa, where a team of five Singaporean golfers captured the World Amateur Golfers Championship (WAGC) title.

What caps it off is that the five are your regular amateur golfers who play at clubs around the island every weekend, not some elite group trained for years under a sporting excellence programme.

And not only did they win the title, the quintet of Erwyn Lam, Melvin Choo, Clara Ang, Colin Tan and Lee Kian also won it in some style, beating second-placed Vietnam by a stunning 27 strokes.

Having been at the WAGC in years past, once as a player and twice as non-playing captain, let me tell you that winning the world team title is no easy task.

You compete against teams from all around the globe in five handicap categories, in unfamiliar courses and unusual playing conditions.

In years past, we battled against flag-bending winds, heavy rain, fog, cold and even icy greens.

This year, the team had to handle fog so thick they needed a forecaddie to let them know the greens were clear on a par-three.

But somehow, through a combination of superlative golf and amazing team consistency, Team Singapore emerged on top.

Erwyn and Lee Kian put the icing on the cake by winning their individual titles as well, with Clara (second) and Colin (second) on the podium and Melvin finishing a respectable seventh. The irony of it all is that Melvin was the standout performer in our national finals in August, carding a one-under 71 (gross) to win the 6-10 handicap division.

And while he contributed strongly to the team, with two nett 71s in Durban, it was the other four who ended up with individual trophies along the team championship.

As Melvin himself explained, it was a "big team effort" that led to victory.

"We covered each other and contributed when it mattered. That was what separated us from the other teams," said the 46-year-old businessman,

For us at SPH, who ran the national qualifiers and prepped the team for the world final, it was a heartening moment to see five regular amateur golfers soar in an international arena. And we are not stopping there.

Our next goal is to help grow the sport among amateurs here, and, in partnership with the Singapore Golf Association, we are now launching a membership for golfers of all abilities.

The SPH Golf card will be your passport to getting and maintaining a handicap, gaining access to good golf courses around us, getting discounts at various merchants, free golf vouchers to play at places like Laguna Bintan and Horizon Hills and golfers' insurance to protect you while you enjoy this wonderful game.

Who knows? Maybe one day someone from this new club of amateur golfers will be flying the flag for Singapore at a world championship.

Now wouldn't that be something to crow about?

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