

Local junior golf gets \$240k shot in arm

With greater focus being placed on developing junior golf in Singapore, the role of the Youth Golf Programme (YGP) has become increasingly important in the local scene.

It will complement the efforts of the Singapore Golf Association (SGA), which this year formed a new junior squad for golfers aged nine to 14, noted former national golfer and YGP alumna Joey Poh.

The 24-year-old added: "The YGP helps that effort by expanding the player base and allowing for more talent to be spotted."

She and fellow YGP alumnus Leverett Chua took part in yesterday's fund-raiser held at Sentosa Golf Club by the Youth Golf Network, which manages the YGP.

More than \$240,000 was raised and the funds will help cover the cost of professional training for the students and the organisation of the Community Youth Golf League, an annual three-leg competition involving the scheme's member schools. The SGA is organising its inaugural Junior Golf Day next month, featuring a nine-hole tournament for current and prospective junior squad members.

"During my time, there were not so many (events) and I mostly competed in amateur tournaments overseas," said Chua.

The 18-year-old Singapore Polytechnic student plans to turn professional eventually. He added: "To be able to start (competing) in Singapore will definitely help golfers improve from a younger age."

The YGP is into its 21st year and was the brainchild of Tay Cheng Khoo, former sports editor of The Straits Times who died in 2007.

It was started in 1997 to introduce youngsters without the means to own golf club memberships to the sport, and has benefited close to 5,000 students since its inception.

Among its alumni are recent SEA Games men's team champion Joshua Shou, multiple Games medallist Koh Sock Hwee and touring pro Johnson Poh.

Said YGP chairman Janice Khoo: "You can see the difference in those who have graduated and matured. They have made golf a part of their lives."

Lester Wong



Former national golfer and YGP alumna Joey Poh meeting donors at yesterday's fund-raiser at Sentosa Golf Club. PHOTO COURTESY OF SINGAPORE GOLF NETWORK