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Malaysia's top guns get the nod for Maybank Championship

- Strong local contingent expected to make an impact when new and improved Saujana greens are put to the test in the country's premier golf tournament

KUALA LUMPUR - 24 January 2019 - Malaysia's representation in this year's Maybank Championship appears to be as good as it has ever been in a big international tournament.

As always, a strong line up of the top Malaysian golfers are fielded and is something all Malaysians can look forward to in the US\$3 million Championship scheduled for March 21 to 24 at Saujana Golf & Country Club.

A 13-strong Malaysian contingent was named today, spearheaded by the country's top-ranked Gavin Green, at a Maybank Championship Media Golf Day at Saujana today. Aside from Gavin Green, two other local pros namely Ben Leong and Nicholas Fung are in the line-up by virtue of their efforts on the Asian Tour.

The other home stars selected are Professional Golf of Malaysia (PGM) Tour Player of the Year Shahriffuddin Ariffin, Danny Chia, Amir Nazrin, Sukree Othman, Kim Leun Kwang, Arie Irawan, Ramasamy Nachimuthu, Wilson Choo, Kenneth De Silva, and Kemarol Baharin, who all qualified through the local rankings.

Speaking at the event, Datuk R Karunakaran, Director of Maybank said, "The Maybank Championship is a unique tournament, truly one 'Where the Best Meet'. While it features the top 60 from each of the European and Asian Tours, and 15 from the world's top 150, we have never neglected our commitment to support and develop local players. Hence, we have set aside places for the top 10 Malaysian golfers - so that they too can have the exposure of playing in a world class event."

For Green, the Maybank Championship will present a good opportunity to make impact not only on his endeavours on the Europe Tour, but also the domestic game. A lot will also be expected from Leong and Fung - both winners on the Asian Tour. The former played alongside Green in the World Cup in Melbourne, Australia, while Fung is generally regarded as among the most consistent of Malaysia's players on the regional circuit.



Shahriffuddin, a multiple winner on the PGM Tour and a player who secured his first Asian Development Tour crown at the co-sanctioned Labuan Championship last August - en route to retaining his Order of Merit title - is another one to watch at Saujana.

The players in general at Saujana today welcomed the improved conditions of the Palm layout, also known as the Cobra course. This follows a refurbishment of the greens, which according to John Eu, Chief Executive Officer of GlobalOne, the promoters of the event, should reach at least 10.5 feet on the Stimpmeter.

“We could maybe get it up to 11.5 during tournament week,” he said. “This is mainly because the most significant improvements made in the refurbishment centred on the 18 putting greens. What took place here was that the seed bed of all the greens was replaced with cleaner and slightly coarser washed river sand. This was vitally important as it improves the porosity of the seedbed which allows the greens to better accommodate our heavy annual rainfall.

“Other improvements included providing the greens with better morning sunlight and air circulation through selective pruning and the removal of trees and undergrowth, and selective sub-soil drainage on fairways and other closely mowed areas,” added Eu.

Added Datuk Karunakaran, “Our Maybank Championship events in the past three years have given us a new and unexpected winner each year. While we do not know if it will happen again this year, what I can assure you is that the 2019 tournament will continue to be as thrilling, or even more so - not only based on the players who have confirmed, and the activities planned, but also because the Palm Course is in great shape after its refurbishment. Saujana is well known for being a challenging course, so the revamped greens will surely add to the excitement.”

The Maybank Championship, which has become Malaysia’s premier golf tournament, is set to announce a few other star attractions soon.

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