

# Despite pandemic, Singapore's golfers remain busy on and off the course

Singapore Golf Association's first High Performance Manager's job is to motivate the players and help them stay focused. **BY GODFREY ROBERT**

**A** Singapore  
S Joshua Ho completes a year as the first High Performance Manager of the Singapore Golf Association (SGA) later this week, he will reflect on being in a profession that virtually landed on his lap.

After completing his four-year business management degree at the Singapore Management University in 2019, he was at a crossroads as to what career path he would embark on.

A couple of internships, especially one with a recruitment agency, drew some of his interest to work for those companies on a full-time basis.

But it was the SGA that ended up hiring the former national golfer, who they felt was a good fit for the association's grand plans to take the sport to a new level, buoyed by a series of successes at the SEA Games and Putra Cup levels.

Now, even during this troubled time with programmes wrecked and overseas trips and high-level competitions cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Mr Ho's career has far from hit a wall.



In fact, the pandemic has got his adrenaline pumping faster as the hardworking 26-year-old is conscientiously working out on schemes and schedules to keep both the national and development squads on their

toes. While many activities have come to a standstill, Mr Ho – together with national coach Matt Ballard – has drawn up a timetable where golfers are kept busy, sometimes in virtual settings.

"We are busy at our base at Laguna National with programmes and range work. I have also strategised on how the players can balance between school and golf, having had such a personal experience," he said.

**Joshua Ho was a national player for 10 years, and he is tapping on his experience of how to best use the time during the off-season and when to peak the players ahead of a tournament.** BT FILE PHOTO

Mr Ho was a national player for 10 years, and he is tapping on his experience of how to best use the time during the off-season and when to peak the players ahead of a tournament.

"Although my job keeps me busy with administrative functions, I deal with parents' expectations, motivate the players and help them keep their focus," he added.

Having a former national player involved in administrative roles at national sports associations (NSAs) is a trend that is quite evident these days.

In Singapore, former players such as Mahmood Gaznavi (cricket); Nicholas Fang (fencing); Chan Peng Mun, Low Teo Ping and Terence Khoo (rugby); Remy Ong (bowling); and swimmers Ang Peng Siong and Joscelin Yeo are, or have had, important stints with NSAs, and this has helped the respective sports tremendously.

On the international scene, two prominent sportsmen who rose to the zenith of their sport are middle-distance runner Sebastian Coe (president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation) and footballer Michel Platini (former UEFA president).

"What we have is an innate passion because we have spent years in our sport," said Mr Ho, a former ACS and ACJC student who dabbled in many sports before settling down to golf, which was introduced to him by his father Jason when he was eight years old.

As a golfer, Mr Ho competed in the SEA Games, Putra Cup, Eisenhower Trophy, Asian Games and Asia-Pacific Championships.

He said this experience will help when he works with Mr Ballard to get the Singapore team in tip-top shape for next year's Putra Cup and SEA Games.

"Been there, done that" would be an apt description for Mr Ho as he takes the 16 members of the national squad and 14 juniors in the development squad through a journey of discovery for the challenges that lie ahead.

btnews@sph.com.sg