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TWO SEN WORTH

A column by golf industry personalities on the state of the game in this region. In this issue, Malaysian golf industry veteran **Mohd Rom Muslim** talks about the importance of role models.

The Role Of Role Models

In order for golf to really boom, youngsters need role models they can be inspired by and emulate

Malaysian golf needs more young people to be interested and involved. There are lots of junior programmes being conducted at schools and clubs in the country, junior competitions are held regularly and golf clubs are becoming more accessible to juniors. The bottom line is this must continue to grow and attract the next generation of golfers. It is crucial to the long-term prosperity of the game.

The question is, how many of these juniors are dead serious about their game? And to what extent in the future? Do they need help? If so, what type of help?

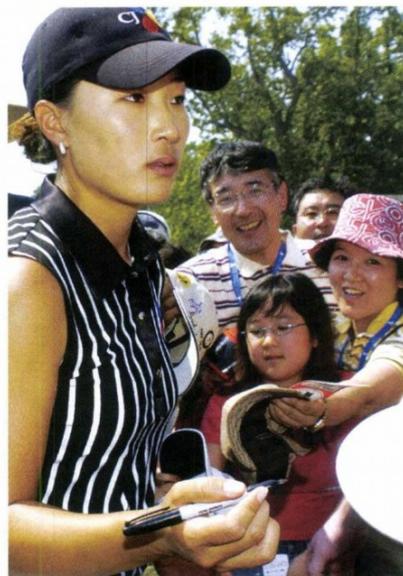
Malaysia did not fare well at the last few big amateur events, namely the Malaysian Amateur Open in Kuching, the SEA Games in Singapore and the Universiade in Gwangju, Korea. The gap between the winners and our players was glaringly wide. Our players lack the precision and sharpness needed to win tournaments.

What we provide in terms of training, coaching, fitness and facilities are comparable to, if not better than, the other countries. So what's the problem? We often asked ourselves, what's missing? Are our players weak mentally?

Maybe it is mental strength due to lack of emphasis on the mental approach and game plan during training. Not enough tournament exposure? Or perhaps they lack the desire to win? These questions need answers – and quickly.

How can we help? Maybe we need local role models to give them a boost.

A role model is someone who serves as an example and whose behaviour is emulated by others. Pak Se Ri won four LPGA tournaments in 1998 including the LPGA Championship and the US Women's Open to ignite a golf explosion in Korea. She became an instant role model and today we see Korea has the largest number of players dominating the LPGA. Maybe Malaysia needs something similar, albeit on a smaller scale!



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Role models are important for our players psychologically. They are a source of inspiration. They can instil the values that the game of golf represents. Tiger Woods was a great role model although, following the scandal, some claimed he failed to live up to expectations.

Do we have locals who can be role models and deliver? Yes we do, so it's timely that our local pros play the part. They can spend some valuable time with the young players, who will value their professional experience and knowledge of the game, leading to a change for the better over time.

Most successful athletes have one thing in common – a mentor who they can confide in and learn from. Besides being role models, the pros can also do mentoring. Mentoring is where one person – the mentor – helps another to achieve his or her goals. So, our top performing pros should seriously consider this role. They should treat this as part of their CSR. It is national service, so to speak.

The Malaysian Golf Association should initiate this for the national players. However, it takes commitment and organisation. Let's have some volunteers to start with. Those involved should also be equipped with basic mentoring skills. This could be a huge contributing factor in preparation for the next SEA Games which Malaysia will host.

Our stakeholders in golf should support this. There is plenty to be gained. Moving forward, these social influences can have a significant and positive impact on our young golfers. PG



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hailing from Melaka, Mohd Rom Muslim is the deputy director of the National Golf Academy at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) in Sintok, Kedah.

Rom was the captain of the storied Ayer Keroh Country Club in Melaka, a position he held for eight years until recently. He is also the president of the Golf Club Managers Association of Malaysia (since 2010) and is the Melaka state representative and chairman of the education sub-committee of the Malaysian Golf Association.

A former corporate man with an MBA from the Cranfield Business School in England, Rom is a much sought-after speaker for golf conferences both local and international. He shows no signs of slowing down at age 64 and is well known for his tireless cross-country trips for work and golf-related duties.