



A WORD TO THE WISE

FATHER OF ASIAN GOLF

A five-time winner of the British Open, a three-time winner of the Australian Open and countless other major tournaments, Peter Thomson is a living golf legend. He was instrumental in helping to develop an Asian professional golf tour where he persuaded his friends who were top players to participate.

Thomson was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1980 and was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1985 and the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1988. Later in his career, he became a course designer and golf writer. He also co-authored *This Wonderful World of Golf* (1969) with Desmond Zwar.

Where are you at in life today?

"I am now 86 years old and in rather fragile health, so I am not able to play more than nine holes of golf in one day. I read a great deal, enjoying history mostly, walk my beloved dog, and spend time with family and friends."

What are your career highlights?

"My Open Championship wins, naturally, but I have enjoyed my travels in Asia over many years, and always enjoyed my visits to Royal Selangor Golf Club."

By Sharifah Intan

Were there particular golfers you enjoyed competing against?

"I had many friends that I enjoyed playing with, but my very closest friend was always (Australian golf icon) Kel Nagle. (Thomson twice paired up with Nagle to win the Canada Cup, now known as the World Cup.) And in Malaysia, (former Group Chief Executive of Sime Darby) Tunku Ahmad Yahaya."

What was it like playing at Royal Selangor Golf Club in the Malaysian Open?

"Royal Selangor was a challenging course. When the tour first came to Royal Selangor, the grass on the greens was far too long and it was a challenge to get the authorities to agree to cut it. Once that was achieved, we enjoyed the course more."

How do you want to be remembered?

"I hope I will be remembered as having made a contribution to golf."

What would it take for a Malaysian to win a Malaysian Open?

"A lot of hard work and dedication. You need to be fit and your brain sharp."



Your advice to young golfers?
“Enjoy playing this great game!”

On playing golf:
“Some say your character comes out when you play golf. You get bad breaks you think you don't deserve. You make mistakes. That's the nature of the game.”



GINN'S TONIC

Two-time Malaysian Open Champion Stewart Ginn is enjoying a quiet life in Malaysia, far removed from the heady days of professional golf. He now runs a dog hotel in Broga, Semenyih with his Malaysian wife, volunteers at golf tournaments and coaches junior golfers.

“When I was playing the Asian circuit in 1973 while in my 20s, I always felt at home in Asia. I picked Malaysia to retire in as it is central, a melting pot of different creeds and cultures. I enjoy the people, the customs and the food,” said the 66-year-old.

With over a dozen wins under his belt, notable career highlights include his wins in the 1977 and 1986 Malaysian Opens. He is especially proud of the fact that his record course score of 63 has not been beaten.

Another proud achievement was his US Senior PGA win in Dearborn, Michigan in 2002 where he scored a one-stroke victory over Jim Thorpe, Mike McCullough and Hubert Green.

On his memories of playing at the Malaysian Open at RSGC, he recalled, “It was lovely to play and joke with players of different nationalities during the tournaments. For an Australian junior coming up the ranks, it was memorable to meet the expat community at the Club.”

He is looking forward to seeing how the players will perform at the Maybank Championship Malaysia in February.

“RSGC has the best course in Malaysia. I have played at many Member-only clubs, but they don't give you the same feeling.”

So what would it take for a Malaysian to win a Malaysian Open? “You need three years on the PGAM tour, which is a good stepping stone to reach the next level. Then it would take another five years to build a golf superstar,” he said.

In an NST interview, Stewart credited Dave Stockton as his greatest influence. At the age of 19, he caddied for the American golf pro at the Wills Masters tournament and at the Australian Open. Stockton told him winning is about planning your game and having a strong mind and, above all, the hunger to better yourself. And that is the message Stewart wants to pass on to young golfers.

“I want to help them get them through the ranks. With my experience, I can impart my knowledge to the younger generation and play a part in creating a champion.”

He said that golf is about taking risks. “I had to be willing to jump on airplanes and go anywhere in the world. That is not what I'm seeing now. Of course every golfer would want a sponsor. It takes the financial pressure off but frankly, if you can, it would be good to pay out of your own pocket.”

“My advice to young golfers is to work hard. They need to be fit, in shape and watch their diet. The PGA Tour players I see today are athletes.”

When asked how he wanted to be remembered, Stewart said, “I would be happy to have my wife sprinkle my ashes out of a golf bag over RSGC.”

And his parting shot – “I am fortunate to be able to play golf. In the end, it's just a game, a beautiful game!”