



Justin Kuk's health scare and comeback ahead of the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship

Description

A 15-inch scar down the middle of his abdomen is a daily reminder for Singapore golfer Justin Kuk to be grateful that he is still playing competitive golf. The 25-year-old makes his third start at the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship at Te Arai Links in Auckland this week, some nine months after a health episode that kept him in hospital for four weeks.



Justin Kuk during a practice round at Te Arai Links, Auckland. Photo: AAC

From a routine procedure to a month in hospital

What began as a routine keyhole procedure for appendicitis in January led to further surgery after an infection set in, followed by a month-long hospital stay. Recovery was slow. Kuk says even taking a shower at home was difficult for two months, and it took another four months before he could resume full practice.

He rebuilt his strength with about a month of physiotherapy, then sessions with a personal trainer three times a week. “I know myself, that I always come back from a setback,” he said. “This might be my biggest setback so far but I just kept trying to keep going each day, day by day.”

A first international title, then a week of preparation at Te Arai

Kuk finished tied 33rd on his Asia-Pacific Amateur debut in 2021 and missed the halfway cut in Dubai last year. To his own surprise, he won his first international title at the Vietnam Amateur Open in July, a timely boost ahead of the 17th edition of the championship.

To prepare, he persuaded his parents to fund a six-day stay at Te Arai Links, where 16 holes offer views of the Pacific Ocean. He played the course three times. “That put a hole in my dad’s pocket,” he joked. He also tweaked his equipment, switching his 60-degree wedge from a V grind to a T grind, which has less bounce, and says he is hitting his ball flight lower.

Chasing Singapore’s first Asia-Pacific Amateur title

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Debutant Ng Wei Jun is Singapore's other representative this week. Photo: AAC

No Singaporean has won the championship since it began in 2009. James Leow's tied-fifth finish in 2019 remains the nation's best result. Kuk, the 2025 Singapore Amateur champion, will try to dethrone defending champion Fifi Laopakdee of Thailand, who won in Dubai last year, while debutant Ng Wei Jun is Singapore's other player in the 120-man field.

The winner earns invitations to the Masters Tournament and The Open next year. "Winning this tournament is going to mean a lot, with the Masters and The Open," said Kuk. "It's always been trying to prove to myself that I'm good enough to be able to win this tournament."

The championship tees off at Te Arai Links on Thursday, 29 October. Organisers have also named the next two venues: read about [the 2027 and 2028 hosts, Hoiana Shores and New South Wales](#). For more Singapore golf, see [Shannon Tan's third-place finish at the Hero Women's Indian Open](#).

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