

# Eagle-eyed Leverett pursues his dream

By **TERENCE ONG**

FOR A long time, golf was merely another way for Leverett Chua to bond with his father.

From the age of three, the 15-year-old Secondary 3 student at St Gabriel's Secondary School watched TV coverage of professional golf with his father, offshore engineer Chua Geok Siong.

Two years ago, what was once a mere pastime fuelled his dream of representing Singapore in golf when he took up the sport seriously after entering St Gabriel's.

Yesterday marked a significant step in the progression of that dream as Chua, a 6.6-handicap-

per, was crowned the overall individual champion (boys) of the Community Youth Golf Programme (CYGP) Inter-School League, which began in June.

In the three-leg league, he carded a 13-over 81, five-over 59 and one-over 74 at the Changi Country Club, National Service Resort and Country Club Safra course and Orchid Country Club respectively.

After the final leg yesterday, he also earned the Tay Cheng Khoon Eagle award. Instituted in 2007, it honours the late Straits Times sports editor who succumbed to cancer that year.

Previous winners of the award

– given not just to those who excel on the greens but also display the right attitude, discipline and perseverance – include dual 2009 SEA Games medallist Johnson Poh, his younger sister Joey Poh and Kok Jo Ee.

It was not given out last year, said CYGP chairman Dr Janice Khoo, as no one fitted the criteria.

This year, Chua – who was one of three golfers in the programme mentored by local professional golfer Mardan Mamat – stood out for his performances both on and off the golf course.

Said Dr Khoo: "Chua projected the values that (exemplified) a good sportsperson and role model

that other people in the programme can look up to.

"Even after winning the award, he remains humble and well-liked among his friends, which is what we like to see in our members."

Added David Soh, captain of Raffles Country Club, where Chua was given free access to the facilities to hone his skills during the programme: "He has a level of maturity unlike his peers when it comes to recovering from mistakes, which is important if he wants to be a successful professional."

For Chua, who represented his primary school in basketball for three years, the award is valida-



Leverett Chua, 15, receiving the Tay Cheng Khoon Eagle award from ST sports editor Marc Lim and CYGP chairman Dr Janice Khoo. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

tion that he is heading in the right direction.

"I'm honoured to receive it," he said. "It will spur me on to

work harder so I can make the national developmental squad in my first step to achieving my dream."

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