

Joey has got something to smile about

SINGAPORE — She fluffed her tee shot on the par-5, 507-metre 15th hole at Tanah Merah Country Club's (TMCC) Garden Course, sending the golf ball into thick brush, but the smile never left Joey Poh's face.

And the grin was there again, on the par-4 17th, after she double bogeyed the hole.

Her dad's advice, to "smile even when you're in deep trouble", worked wonders for the 16-year-old yesterday as she came away with a 4-over 76 for a two-day total of 153 total (77, 76) to clinch the only spot available for a Singapore woman at the US\$1.3 million (\$1.82 million) HSBC Women's Champions from Feb 25 to 28.

"My dad taught me to smile even when you're playing badly, to show others that you're confident, and so you won't feel depressed ... I used that today," said the Auckland University of Technology student.

Her winning smile was back again on the par-4 18th, after sinking the putt for even par to finish with a six-stroke lead, as the other nine competitors in the HSBC Women's Champions Local Qualifying tournament congratulated the youngster.

Professional golfer Ji Jiali finished second after carding 159 (78, 81) and Stephanie Loi was third on 161 (79, 82).

Joey will join idols Michelle Wie and Paula Creamer on the TMCC's Garden course next month — her second appearance in as many years — alongside Asian giants likes world No 2 and defending champion Shin Jiyai (South Korea), Taiwan's Yani Tseng (6) and Japan's Ai Miyazato (8).

World No 1 Lorena Ochoa (Mexico) has also confirmed her participation in the annual event. **LOW LIN FHOONG**

Visit www.hsbcgolf.com for more information on the HSBC Women's Champions.



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