

RAIN DELAYS START OF 30th TOYOTA JUNIOR GOLF WORLD CUP
Soaked course prompts just 2nd washout in history; Round 1 pushed to Wednesday

TOYOTA CITY, Japan (June 18, 2024) — For just the second time in a history going back three decades, the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines has endured a day without a single shot being struck.

Steady rain that began in Japan's overnight hours continued to fall deep into Tuesday morning, soaking Chukyo Golf Club's Ishino course beyond any playable condition that would allow Round 1 to start later in the day.

Play in the tournament's 30th edition now will begin Wednesday, keeping the original tee times. With rain moving out of the Nagoya area by Tuesday night, tournament officials are hopeful players can get three rounds in the books by Friday's scheduled finish.

"Our goal is to be able to play 54 holes," said William Kerdyk, chairman of the tournament committee. "It's truly unfortunate that our historic 30th playing of this event begins this way, but we will work to give our participants the best playing experience that we can."

The only other time the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup has lost a day to weather came in the 2002 edition, when Round 3 was rained out and the event trimmed to 54 holes. England's boys won the team title that year by two shots over Sweden; England's Matthew Richardson claimed top honors individually.

Since then, the only other edition to go 54 holes came in 2022, when the event returned to the schedule after a two-year hiatus prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year's edition returned to its usual four-day format, with host Japan making a clean sweep of boys' and girls' team and individual titles.

A total of 63 golfers — 12 boys' teams and nine on the girls' side — are at Chukyo GC this week to compete for the twin trophies. The format is similar to U.S. college golf, with each team counting the two best scores among its three players each day.

"I hope we have a really good competition this year," said Jasmine Koo, back with Team USA for a second time after being part of last year's record-smashing duel against Japan's powerhouse girls.

That showdown produced new girls' scoring records each day, ending with both teams shattering the previous 72-hole scoring mark as Japan finished two shots clear for its third title in a four-year span.

Though Koo has two new teammates and Japan's roster has fully turned over, both sides are hopeful for a similarly spirited contest this week.

"I know how good a team we had last year," said Japan's Mamika Shinchi, who won the Australian Women's Amateur earlier this year. "But I think we are no worse than last year's team. If we play as well as we are capable of, we have a good chance of winning."

Shinchi used a closing 66 in Australia to overcome a six-shot deficit, with teammate Aina Fujimoto tying for third.

One of Koo's teammates is fellow Californian Nikki Oh — daughter of Ted Oh, who played in three Junior World Cups in the 1990s — along with Junior Orange Bowl International titleholder Kayla Bryant.

"Two of us need to go low each day," Koo said, "and I know each of us has the capability to do that."

The boys' division appears wide open, with significant turnover across all rosters. The United States, which rallied for a share of third last year, has Billy Davis back after tying for third individually. He's joined by Jackson Byrd, son of PGA Tour mainstay Jonathan Byrd, and William Jennings.

"I really wanted to get some hardware going into (last year), and we managed to do that," Davis said. "Maybe we can get the gold this year."

Two rosters feature three players in the top 800 of the World Amateur Golf Rankings. England is led by Ben Bolton, winner of the Faldo Series final last December and third in the German Boys' Open.

The wild card could be Colombia, making its first boys' appearance since 2019 but with three players in the top 500. Samuel Gonzalez is the reigning South American Junior champion and has stockpiled eight top-10 finishes in 2024.

All seek to add their names to a history that features 10 major champions, including each of the past four Masters winners — reigning champion Scottie Scheffler (twice), Jon Rahm and Hideki Matsuyama.

Others include Justin Rose, a former U.S. Open champion and Olympic gold medalist, Cameron Smith (2022 Open Championship), Henrik Stenson (2013 Open Championship), Charl Schwartzel (2011 Masters) and Louis Oosthuizen (2010 Open Championship).

Though the girls' division has yet to produce a major champion in its eight-year history, three participants later won the Augusta National Women's Amateur — Tsubasa Kajitani, Anna Davis and Rose Zhang.

More information about the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines can be found online at WJGTC.org, including a video library that includes interviews with former participants.