

Vanchai Ends 'Toy's' Winning Story at Faldo Series Thailand Championship – South



Mark Vanchai Luangnitikul is congratulated on his success by Walaiporn Pattamavichitvong and Paul Wilson.

Napat Paramacharoenroj's reign as 2017 Faldo Series Thailand Championship – South winner has been ended by national squad player Mark Vanchai Luangnitikul after a thrilling duel at Laguna Golf Phuket.

However, Napat's hopes of becoming only the third two-time winner of the Faldo Series Asia Grand Final crown are still alive. Thanks to his second-place finish in the seventh leg of the 2017 – 18 Faldo Series Asia season, Napat – nicknamed 'Toy' – has guaranteed himself a return trip to Laguna Lăng Cô in Danang, Central Vietnam in March 2018 for the 12th edition of the Grand Final.

In an absorbing 36-hole contest in Phuket, Napat vied for top spot with fellow British International School Phuket student Vanchai and Bangkok-based Conor Kelly.

Napat it was who held the upper hand after an immaculately compiled opening six-under-par 65, three shots ahead of Vanchai and five clear of Kelly.

When 16-year-old Napat extended his advantage following birdies at the fourth and fifth in the final round, his rivals' prospects appeared poor at best.

However, there was a significant shift in momentum at the par-five seventh, where a rare wayward shot from Napat came to rest behind a tree trunk. From there, he was only able to chip out sideways en route to a bogey-six while both his playing partners converted short birdie putts.

A two-putt birdie for Vanchai at the par-four 10th, where he powered a massive drive to the edge of the green, reduced Napat's lead to one. Clearly shaken, Napat then suffered a streak of three successive bogeys from the 12th which left him two behind Vanchai with four holes remaining and Kelly hot on his heels.



It was then Vanchai's turn to experience a wobble, his tee-shot to the par-three 16th finding a water hazard. He rescued a bogey but now led by only one from Napat and three from Kelly.

It was the dog-leg right 17th that was to prove pivotal with Vanchai eking out a par while Napat and Kelly both bogeyed. With a two-shot cushion, Vanchai was able to afford the luxury of a three-putt bogey on the final hole.

Winner of the Singha Thailand Amateur Match Play Championship in April and a member of his country's triumphant Lion City Cup team in Indonesia last month, Vanchai signed off in Phuket with a two-under 69. His 137 aggregate was one in front of Napat and three ahead of Kelly.

Paul Wilson, Laguna Golf Assistant Vice President/Group Golf Director, said: "We were fortunate to witness such high quality golf which emphasises, once more, the tremendous strength in depth that there is in junior golfers across Thailand.

"We are excited that both 'Toy' and Mark will now be heading to the Grand Final in Vietnam, where they will have the chance to spend time with Sir Nick and test their skills against many of the best young players from around the region."

Also heading to the Grand Final is Parinyawee Panno, who topped the standings in the Girls' Under-16 category at Laguna Golf Phuket, the sister club of the Faldo-designed Laguna Golf Lãng Cô.

Meanwhile, Wilson said he was confident that the Faldo Series Thailand Championship – South will grow from strength to strength. "Besides competitors from Phuket, it was encouraging that we had entrants from Bangkok and Singapore. It was also wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the children who took part in the Under-12 segment. We hope they'll continue developing their games ... and go on to become Faldo Series champions."

This year marks the second time that Thailand has hosted two Faldo Series Asia qualifiers with Weerawish Narkprachar having upstaged some of his country's leading juniors to emerge triumphant in the 12th edition of the Faldo Series Thailand Championship (North) at Plutaluang Navy Golf Course, south of Pattaya, in May.

The 2017-18 Faldo Series Asia season is supported by The R&A and endorsed by the Asian Tour and the Asia Pacific Golf Confederation. The International Junior Golf Academy is a partner of the Faldo Series.

As well as two events in China, India and Thailand, championships are being staged in Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chinese-Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

Recognised as the only global amateur series for boys and girls, the Faldo Series was established in 1996, expanding to Asia in 2006.



Today, 40 Faldo Series tournaments take place in 30-plus countries worldwide, touching more than 7,000 golfers each year. Past champions include Tseng Ya-ni and Rory McIlroy, both multiple Major winners.

Faldo Series Thailand Championship – South, leading final scores: Boys' Under-18/Under 16: 137 – Vanchai Luangnitikul (68-69). 138 – Napat Paramacharoenroj (65-73). 140 – Conor Kelly (70-70). 153 – Sebastian Sawtell (79-74). 157 – Nanthanat Kongkaew (80-77). Girls' Under-16: 159 – Parinyawee Panno (82-77). 166 – Surapa Janthamunee (84-82). 169 – Molly Yun (81-88). Boys' Under-12: 158 – Filip Arnesten (79-79). 161 – Damon Dongwook (79-82). 165 – Pongwarut Satonsamritpon (79-86). Girls' Under-12: 165 – Mint Laugnitikul (83-82). 169 – Nichapas Thawinwan (81-88). 176 – Louise Landgraf (94-82).

To learn more information, visit www.lagunagolf.com/phuket or contact +66 76 324 350 / golf@lagunaphuket.com. For more information on the Faldo Series, please visit: <http://nickfaldo.com/about-faldo-series>.

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Note to Editor:

Laguna Golf Phuket

Laguna Golf Phuket is an 18-hole, par 71 golf course situated in the heart of Asia's first integrated resort – Laguna Phuket. Thoroughly redesigned and reopened in 2015, the new landscaping with great emphasis on natural surroundings and wildlife provides golfers a whole new golfing experience. During the game, a tranquil journey into the native cultural experience with infused local elements creates a unique sense of place. The Thai villa design clubhouse offers a host of luxury facilities, including a well-stocked Pro Shop and international dining option. The newly upgraded Laguna Golf Academy Phuket – Southeast Asia's first PGA branded golf academy offers ultimate premium practice facilities and a wide range of teaching packages, with a team of experienced PGA golf instructors providing enjoyable golf learning experience. The golf course is conveniently accessible by complimentary shuttle service from the surrounding hotels in Laguna Phuket Resort.

lagunagolf.com/phuket

Sir Nick Faldo

With six Major championships, more than 40 tournament victories and a total of 98 weeks as the world's number one golfer, Nick is regarded as the most successful golfer that Britain has ever produced. For his distinctive contributions and service to golf, Nick Faldo received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II in November 2009. Sir Nick is the only living British golfer to receive such an honour.

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