

MORE RECORDS FALL AT TOYOTA JUNIOR GOLF WORLD CUP

Japan girls break 36-hole mark, but U.S. rivals close gap with own record



TOYOTA CITY, Japan (June 21, 2023) — Wednesday was a day to bring more records crashing down at the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines — though not all of them came from Japan’s frontrunners.

And suddenly, neither division seems the runaway it did just one day earlier.

“I feel like now we’re getting somewhere,” said Anna Davis, whose 7-under-par 65 helped power a United States surge that rewrote the girls’ single-day scoring mark Japan had broken

just 24 hours earlier.

Combined with a second consecutive 66 by girls' individual leader Jasmine Koo, the U.S. squad teamed for a 13-under 131 that went one lower than what Japan had posted in Tuesday's opening round.

Not that the Japan girls went away empty-handed on Wednesday. With a pair of 68s from Saori Iijima and Saki Baba, the host nation shattered the 36-hole scoring mark previously held by Japan's 2015 champions.

Japan reached this year's midway point at 20-under 268, six strokes better than the old standard. Team USA also broke the previous record, as they narrowed what had been a seven-shot gap to just two.

"With the USA right behind, we don't want to panic," Iijima said. "But we do want to play well to keep the margin and pull off the victory."

Japan's boys fell just short of breaking the 36-hole record in their division, encountering some

stumbles over the closing holes at Chukyo Golf Club's Ishino course. Wednesday's 209 total was 10 strokes higher than Day 1, leaving them with a two-day 408 that was one shy of South Africa's 2019 mark.

"It didn't go as well as we hoped," said Kaito Sato, whose 1-under-par 70 on Wednesday dropped him from sharing the individual lead to one shot behind Germany's Phillipp Macionga and American Billy Davis.

"The players who were playing well yesterday didn't play that well today. And the players who didn't play that great yesterday are playing better today. So I feel there's a good balance in the team."

Even so, Japan's late fallback narrowed their advantage to just three shots over Germany and defending champion Canada.

"They'd been playing so good," said Cooper Humphreys, who led Canada's charge with a 65 on Wednesday. "If we all play our games and have fun, you never know what can happen. We'll just have to find out."

Thursday shapes up to be a challenge for all involved with rain prominent in the forecast, potentially heavy at times.

"I guess we'll see tomorrow," said Koo. "Anything can happen. I'm glad we're right behind (Japan) now."

The competition utilizes a format similar to U.S. college golf, with each boys' team counting the three best scores among its four players each day. In the girls' division, each team counts the two best scores among three.

Koo, part of a five-way tie for the Day 1 individual lead, picked up right where she left off as Wednesday began. Three consecutive birdies quickly took her to 9-under, including a tee shot at the 135-yard second hole that came within inches of a hole-in-one.

The Californian's total of 12-under 132 not only broke the girls' 36-hole record by three, but is one shot better than the four-day totals of any previous medalist.

"I've never been 12-under through two days," said Koo, who went 34 holes before making her first bogey. "But I honestly feel like this field is so strong, I've got to keep my head."

Just two shots back lurked Iijima, the newly crowned Japan Women's Amateur champion who followed her opening 66 with a 68. After leaving the scoring area, she took an extended look at Team USA's scores on the board.

"If I were playing for the U.S. team," she observed, "my score wouldn't have been used."

Not with the bounceback from Anna Davis, whose 65 was eight shots better than an opening round when she acknowledged she wasn't feeling well.

"Today I was feeling better and I didn't make any mistakes," said Davis, the 2022 Augusta National Women's Amateur winner. "I was just hitting it close and making a lot of 4-footers. It was a pretty simple round."

Billy Davis, Anna's twin, surged into a share of the boys' individual lead with a 68 that included three birdies in his last six holes. He reached the midway point at 8-under 134, matched when

Macionga posted his own 68.

The Toyota Junior Golf World Cup, now in its 29th edition, is the final destination of a process that began with 70 national teams entered in regional qualifiers across six continents.

The boys' field features 12 teams competing for this year's championship; eight teams advanced to the girls' finals.

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.

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BOYS TEAM STANDINGS

1. Japan 199-209=408 (-18)

t2. Canada	209-202=411 (-15)
t2. Germany	207-204=411 (-15)
4. United States	207-206=413 (-13)
5. Korea	206-210=416 (-10)
6. Paraguay	211-206=417 (-9)
7. England	208-211=419 (-7)
8. New Zealand	211-213=424 (-2)
9. South Africa	216-219=435 (+9)
10. Chile	218-219=437 (+11)
11. Puerto Rico	223-227=450 (+24)
12. Uganda	234-232=466 (+40)

GIRLS TEAM STANDINGS

1. Japan	132-136=268 (-20)
2. United States	139-131=270 (-18)
3. Korea	138-136=274 (-14)
4. Colombia	143-136=279 (-9)

5. New Zealand $142-139=281$ (-7)
- t6. Spain $138-146=284$ (-4)
- t6. Canada $143-141=284$ (-4)
8. South Africa $148-143=291$ (+3)

BOYS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

- t1. Phillip Macionga, Germany $66-68=134$ (-8)
- t1. Billy Davis, United States $66-68=134$ (-8)
- t3. Kaito Sato, Japan $65-70=135$ (-7)
- t3. Jaewon Lee, Korea $66-69=135$ (-7)
- t3. Franco Fernandez, Paraguay $71-64=135$ (-7)
- t6. Taishi Moto, Japan $69-67=136$ (-6)
- t6. Dylan Shaw-Radford, England $67-69=136$ (-6)
- t6. Ethan Wilson, Canada $68-68=136$ (-6)
- t6. Cooper Humphreys, Canada $71-65=136$ (-6)
- t10. Tyler Weaver, England $69-68=137$ (-5)
- t10. Reo Maruo, Japan $65-72=137$ (-5)

GIRLS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

1. Jasmine Koo, United States	66-66=132 (-12)
2. Saori Iijima, Japan	66-68=134 (-10)
t3. Jose Maria Marin, Colombia	66-70=136 (-8)
t3. Yuna Araki, Japan	66-70=136 (-8)
t5. Yeonju An, Korea	69-68=137 (-7)
t5. Jiwoo Shin, Korea	69-68=137 (-7)
7. Anna Davis, United States	73-65=138 (-6)
t8. Anna Cañado, Spain	66-73=139 (-5)
t8. Saki Baba, Japan	71-68=139 (-5)
t10. Fiona Xu, New Zealand	70-71=141 (-3)
t10. Vanessa Borovilos, Canada	71-70=141 (-3)
t10. Katie Li, United States	73-68=141 (-3)