

# Nathan has the Hills to climb

**A** well-known figure in the golf industry, S A Nathan has been at the helm of prominent clubs like Saujana Golf and Country Club in Subang and Kota Permai Golf and Country Club in Shah Alam in a career spanning more than two decades.

Nathan now moves to a different challenge in the highlands, leading the Berjaya Hills Golf and Country Club, which is a 40-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur, as its general manager.

He is confident the Michael Poellot-designed layout with its panoramic vistas and strategically interesting holes will attract more golfers. Ever the optimist, he again seeks to climb another mountain, that is, to raise overall standards in the golf club.

In an interview with *Playin-Around*, he relates some of the plans and goals being set for Berjaya Hills.

**What are your immediate priorities?**

The course has always been in good playing condition. Currently, we are ensuring that our course maintenance programme reaches a higher standard. When golfers play our course, they will have fond memories of playing in a one of the best-maintained courses in the country.

**What are the long-term objectives of the club?**

I want to see five-star standards at Berjaya Hills Golf & Country Club, that is, aspects like food quality, services and also the golf course rivaling the renowned Valderama Golf Club in Spain. We can achieve them if we put our heart and soul into it. The vision is to see Berjaya Hills become the best in Malaysia. We have an extremely well-set-out layout, and it is well received and is further complemented by cool weather

Long-time club manager Nathan heads to Berjaya Hills to begin a new phase in his management career

at 2,230ft above sea level.

**Most golf clubs have a signature hole to symbolise the club's unique challenge. Is there any hole in particular that signifies this?**

Hole 17 remains our highly identifiable signature hole. It is quite a challenging hole where you need to manage every shot. It is a scenic hole as well. However, golfers have found every hole in this course to be unique in its layout.

**Tell us about the maintenance programme.**

On the maintenance programme — as mentioned earlier, we are spending vast sums of money to improve the course, that is, drainage, bunkers and the greens as well. We want to see repeat customers who will return to take on the challenge of our course. We are also going to invest in turf machinery.

**What is the club's approach to corporate golf?**

This is one area that I am personally looking into. A lot of companies and individuals don't know about our packages. We have 34 rooms in the club for accommodation.

**Tell us about your golfing and stay-and-play packages.**

We are offering a "Seasonal Golf Package". For every flight of four golfers, we are giving a complimentary round for one. It works out to about RM69 per golfer, including green fees, buggy and insurance. This promotion seems attractive. Golfers

just love it. We have a "Play and Stay" package that's at RM233 (breakfast, green fees and room included).

**Any plans to host bigger events like the Malaysian Amateur Open?**

Now we are hosting the Pahang Men & Ladies Amateur Open 2009, which is scheduled on July 24-26. Of course, we are looking out for bigger events to be played at Berjaya Hills Golf & Country Club. Who knows, it could even be the Malaysian Open some day.

**Are there any plans to have caddies at the course?**

Currently, we have 10 female caddies from Indonesia and we are adding another ten. We will increase the number if the need arises.

**Is there any drive for membership?**

We have 1,000 members now. I have plans to launch a membership drive this November.

**How would you describe future prospects?**

It is very good. Course architect Poellet has done a superb job, and there a lot of golfers who have commented very favourably on our course. The layout has been given the thumbs-up. It is my belief that we will achieve the best-course rating in time to come.

**Tell us about your own background in golf.**

I have been working in the golf club industry for the past 22 years. Two of those clubs have achieved best-course ratings. I would like to do a hattrick before I call it quits. That is my dream. To me, Berjaya Hills Golf & Country Club has the potential to achieve that.



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