

GOLF

Thai teen takes the lead at Selangor Masters with a scorching seven-under

PETALING JAYA: Former world junior amateur champion Chinnarat Phadungsil of Thailand established a new course record of seven-under 64 to lead after the first round of the Worldwide Selangor Masters at the Seri Selangor Golf Club yesterday.

The 19-year-old took only 25 putts to open a two-stroke lead over Australian Adam Blyth in the RM1mil (US\$310,000) event, which is making its debut on the Asian Tour.

Japan's Taichiro Kiyota, Fijian Dinesh Chand, who shot two eagles,

and Singaporean veteran M. Murugiah are three off the lead while a flu-stricken Danny Chia and Iain Steel carried the local challenge with matching 68s.

The power-packed Chinnarat, a two-time winner on the Asian Tour, was flawless on the putting surface as he drained putt after putt for his blistering start, which bettered the previous course record by one shot.

"I had some luck with me as I didn't hit it too well but made putts from everywhere. I was holing out 10 footers for birdies. My putting

Results

Leading first round scores: 64: Chinnarat Phadungsil (Tha); 66: Adam Blyth (Aus); 67: Taichiro Kiyota (Jpn); Dinesh Chand (Fiji); M. Murugiah (Sin); 68: Danny Chia (Mas); Iain Steel (Mal); Noh Seung-yul (Kor); Chawalit Phaphol (Tha); Scott Barr (Aus); Neven Besic (Aus); 69: Amandeep V. Jelli (Ind); Marc Pucay (Phi); Lin Wen-lang (Tpe); Ganav Ghe (Ind); Lu Wenteh (Tpe); Hur In-hoi (Kor); Juve Pagunsan; 70: Thongchai khdee (Tha); 71: Ben Leong (Mal).

hasn't been great this year and I changed to a new putter this week," he said.

Chinnarat, who has two top-10s

this season, surprised even himself with his scorching start. He sank eight birdies against a lone bogey.

"When I first saw the course, I thought that one under would be a good round. If you miss it left or right, you can easily run up a big number. If I shoot one or two under tomorrow, I'll take it," he said.

Blyth, who played in his first major at the British Open last month, is a man in form after winning a pro-am tournament in Australia by a whopping 15 shots at the weekend following an impres-

sive 28-under-par total.

Two eagles kept him in touch with Chinnarat although Blyth lamented a bogey on his 16th hole of the day at the seventh which was his first dropped shot in 80 holes from two events.

"It was a good start. I felt pretty average after just flying in only yesterday. But I guess from playing well last week, it just kept flowing," said Blyth.

India's Digvijay Singh produced some excitement when he sank a hole-in-one on the par three eighth en route to a 75.