

'Opening Up The Game In Phuket'

Construction has begun on a nine-hole teaching academy in Phuket Island that is aiming to unleash a new generation of Thai players on to the world golf stage within three to four years.

Jonathan Morrow, a golf pro who has moved into course design, said the creation of the par-30 layout at Amphur Chalong in the southern part of the Thai island is expected to take up to six months.

The facility, which will feature par-threes and par-fours ranging from 100 yards to 420 yards, is scheduled to open early next year. In total, the course will measure 2,100 yards from the 'pro tees' and 1,750 yards from the reds.

There will also be a two-storey, covered 350-yard driving range with both grass and mat tees in addition to a 3,000-square metre short game and video technology area.

Phuket Green Co Ltd, the owner of the facility, has budgeted 1.18 billion baht (about US\$37.3 million) for the project, including the cost of the land and construction of the course, range, teaching facilities, 20 units of accommodation and 25 luxury houses.

Morrow, who designed the Red Mountain course, the second 18 at Phuket's Loch Palm Golf Club, called the Chalong project a "ground-breaker" for the resort island as it planned to start various development programmes targeted at talented youngsters.

A former Welsh Boys champion who set up the first Gary Player Academy in Asia at Blue Canyon, Morrow (*pictured on site*) said: "This is exciting as it will open up the game to a whole new generation of golfers who can't afford the time or money for what it costs to play 18 holes of golf in Phuket.

"Golf on the island has been getting increasingly pricey, especially during the peak seasons, and what we are offering should be a great family opportunity.

"Visually the land looks like the type of sand dunes found in the UK, so we will pursue a links theme and leave the 'dunes' area alone. There is also a stunning new temple being built across the lake from what will be the best looking par-four. So it should be quite photogenic."

-Al Campbell



Elite Programme For Elite Players

When it comes to practice, quality time focusing on important areas is the key to success. So says Jonathan Wallett, director of elitecoaching.com Golf Academy.

Wallett, an accredited mental game coach, said the academy's aim is to provide an opportunity whereby aspiring golfers can fulfill their talents and their dreams.

He said: "A common problem I see in my work with elite players is that they are under the misconception that in order to get better they need to practice 10 hours a day, hitting ball after ball. But that's not a successful formula.

"In order to get better they need to work on developing their

skills in each area of the game – technical, mental, management and physiological."

The academy's programmes are devised for good amateurs and young professionals who are assisted in developing their skills and reaching their targets with the academy's use of the latest technology.

Wallett (*inset*) emphasises the importance of a sound mental approach. "Often, students do not know how to practice the mental game and this is where we can really help with exercises to build and develop their mental skills."

Meanwhile, the physical training for the academy's programmes is directed by Josh Meyer, a



physiotherapist who specialises in golf. All students receive a personal screening after which a training plan is devised according to their physiological needs.

Physical training for elite students is a combination of corrective exercises, flexibility, strength and aerobic training (*pictured*), mixed up with boxing based exercises and beach work with the surf.

Within the recent four-month programme at the Royal Pines Resort on Australia's Gold Coast, students had the opportunity to compete in various tournaments.

The academy offers long and short-term elite programmes, either 100 per cent golf focused or with study options. For further details visit www.elitecoaching.com

