

## JAPAN SWEEPS TEAM GLORY AT TOYOTA JUNIOR GOLF WORLD CUP



Araki, teammates hold off U.S. girls' charge with record score; Sato leads boys' double

Full scoring: [golfstat.com](http://golfstat.com/)

Latest photos: [adobe.ly/44dTDxK](http://adobe.ly/44dTDxK)

TOYOTA CITY, Japan (June 23, 2023) — To no one's great surprise, Japan wound up sweeping top honors on the final day of the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines — though it wound up more stressful than perhaps anyone might have imagined.

That was especially true in the girls' division, which went to Friday's final hole before the host nation — which had smashed scoring records every day this week — managed to hold off a frenzied United States comeback to claim its third team title in the past four editions.

“I was actually so nervous on that last hole that my hands were shaking,” admitted Yuna Araki, whose closing par at Chukyo Golf Club's Ishino course not only clinched the team title but individual honors over Californian Anna Davis.

After beginning the day with a seven-shot advantage, Japan found itself tied with the U.S. squad with just six holes left to play among all groups. Late birdies by Araki and Saki Baba nudged the Japanese trio back in front, clinching a two-shot triumph even with a record total of 34-under-par 542.

It was somewhat easier for Japan's boys, though their six-shot lead to start the day shrank to just two over Canada midway through the opening nine. But that's where Kaito Sato, Reo Maruo and Jukito Ogawa stepped things up, combining for eight birdies in a four-hole stretch to create more cushion as they made the turn.

“Those birdies at (Nos.) 5, 6 and 7 created a good rhythm for me personally,” said Sato, also the boys’ individual winner after a 5-under-par 67. “I’d imagine it was the same for the others.”

Japan’s team score of 34-under 818 — third-best in nearly three decades of tournament history — was enough to outpace Canada by four. It was the host nation’s first victory on the boys’ side since 2015.

Friday’s results also marked the first time that one nation captured both boys’ and girls’ trophies since 2017, when Team USA also went home with the complete set of both team championships and both individual crowns.

“It is a good thing that the boys were able to keep up with the girls this week,” said Sato. “I think overall, Japanese players are getting better and we are able to compete on the world stage.”

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.

The week had been billed as a showdown of the powerful Japanese and U.S. girls, and Friday’s final hours did not disappoint. While Japan’s trio of Araki, Baba and Saori Iijima got off to a collective slow start — just one birdie between them in the first six holes — their U.S. counterparts were firing.

Jasmine Koo reeled off three straight birdies from Nos. 2-4, though she later cooled off. Davis had three birdies in a bogey-free front nine as the Americans sliced the lead by nearly half.

“We all knew what we had to do,” said Davis, winner of the 2022 Augusta National Women’s Amateur. “We knew we were seven shots behind, but we knew it was definitely possible to make up. We were close there for a while.”

Better than close, standing side-by-side at 32-under late in the final stretch. Baba, the reigning U.S. Women’s Amateur champion, birdied the par-4 17th to nose Japan in front as Team USA’s Katie Li finished up a 67.

Araki and Davis, playing in the group behind, each birdied No. 16 and parred No. 17 to keep the margin at one going to the 18th tee.

Araki, nerves notwithstanding, found the fairway but Davis watched her drive race into a fairway bunker — plugging just underneath the lip.

“Not a very good combination, to say the least,” Davis quipped.

She managed to advance the ball just short and right of the green, but her chip shot ran 15 feet past the pin and she couldn't convert the par save.

Araki's approach came down just short of the green, but she was able to chip within inches for the victory.

Japan now has enjoyed victory five times in the eight years that a girls' division has been contested, never finishing outside the top two. This team, though, might be the best of the bunch. In addition to Baba and Araki, Iijima is the newly crowned Japan Women's Amateur champion.

“We had a perfect team this week,” Araki said. “The three of us are very close personally, and my teammates have won big tournaments before. I felt confident in their abilities.”

Araki's closing 71 left her at 15-under-par 273, four shots better than the previous girls' record shared by Rose Zhang (USA), Cory Lopez (Mexico) and Cassie Porter (Australia) in the 2019 edition. Davis (68) and Korea's Yeonju An (69) finished one shot back.

Sato's second consecutive 67 gave him a finishing total of 15-under 269, three shots clear of Korea's Jaewon Lee (69). Billy Davis — Anna's twin — was another two strokes back after a closing 67, tied with Japan's Taishi Moto (70).

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





The boys' field features 12 teams competing for the championship, while eight girls' teams advanced.

“This has been a very special week for all of us,” said William Kerdyk, chairman of the tournament committee. “It has been a pleasure observing so many positive interactions this week between players, coaches and captains of the various teams.”

More information about the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines can be found online at [WJGTC.org](http://WJGTC.org), including a video library that includes interviews with former participants.

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#### BOYS TEAM STANDINGS

1. Japan	199-209-207-203=818 (-34)
2. Canada	209-202-210-201=822 (-30)
t3. Germany	207-204-215-206=832 (-20)
t3. United States	207-206-216-203=832 (-20)
t5. Korea	206-210-213-209=838 (-14)
t5. England	208-211-220-199=838 (-14)

7. Paraguay	211-206-225-213=855 (+3)
8. Chile	218-219-212-209=858 (+6)
9. New Zealand	211-213-228-209=861 (+9)
10. South Africa	216-219-222-215=872 (+20)
11. Puerto Rico	223-227-224-218=892 (+40)
12. Uganda	234-232-239-231=936 (+84)

#### GIRLS TEAM STANDINGS

1. Japan	132-136-134-140=542 (-34)
2. United States	139-131-139-135=544 (-32)
3. Korea	138-136-138-139=551 (-25)
4. New Zealand	142-139-139-138=558 (-18)
5. Canada	143-141-143-140=567 (-9)
6. Colombia	143-136-145-144=568 (-8)
7. Spain	138-146-145-140=569 (-7)
8. South Africa	148-143-145-153=589 (+13)

## BOYS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

1. Kaito Sato, Japan	65-70-67-67=269 (-15)
2. Jaewon Lee, Korea	66-69-68-69=272 (-12)
t3. Billy Davis, United States	66-68-73-67=274 (-10)
t3. Taishi Moto, Japan	69-67-68-70=274 (-10)
t5. Ethan Wilson, Canada	68-68-73-66=275 (-9)
t5. Phillipp Macionga, Germany	66-68-72-69=275 (-9)
t7. Dylan Shaw-Radford, England	67-69-73-67=276 (-8)
t7. Alex Zhang, Canada	70-69-69-68=276 (-8)
9. Tyler Weaver, England	69-68-75-65=277 (-7)
t10. Cooper Humphries, Canada	71-65-75-67=278 (-6)
t10. Nils-Levi Bock, Germany	69-69-70-70=278 (-6)

## GIRLS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

1. Yuna Araki, Japan	66-70-66-71=273 (-15)
t2. Anna Davis, United States	73-65-68-68=274 (-14)

t2. Yeonju An, Korea	69-68-68-69=274 (-14)
4. Fiona Xu, New Zealand	70-71-69-65=275 (-13)
5. Saki Baba, Japan	71-68-68-69=276 (-12)
t6. Jiwoo Shin, Korea	69-68-70-70=277 (-11)
t6. Jasmine Koo, United States	66-66-74-71=277 (-11)
8. Katie Li, United States	73-68-71-67=279 (-9)
t9. Vanessa Borovilos, Canada	71-70-70-69=280 (-8)
t9. Saori Iijima, Japan	66-68-73-73=280 (-8)