

## **JAPAN SHINES ON GRAY DAY AT TOYOTA JUNIOR GOLF WORLD CUP**

***Host nation girls keep breaking records; boys also extend gap on rivals***



Full scoring: [golfstat.com](https://www.golfstat.com)

Latest photos: [adobe.ly/43SXFf2](https://adobe.ly/43SXFf2)

TOYOTA CITY, Japan (June 22, 2023) — Gray skies and a steady drizzle greeted golfers as Round 3 began Thursday at the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup Supported by Japan Airlines, which may have played right into the host nation's hands.

While Japan's girls continued their rewrite of the tournament's record book, adding the 54-hole scoring record to their list, the boys also were in their element as they doubled their lead from the previous day and put themselves in position to sweep the team trophies.

"We just need to make sure to keep our foot on the pedal and keep going," said Kaito Sato, who also leads the race for the boys' individual title.

With Yuna Araki's 6-under-par 66 vaulting her into the individual lead, Japan's girls posted 10-under 134 on Thursday to complete three days at an astounding 30-under 402 — shattering the old 54-hole record by 15 shots.

Spain established the record at 417 last year, when the event was restricted to just three rounds. In every round this week, Japan has posted a team score no worse than 8-under par.

With no other squad able to do better than 6-under on Thursday, Japan will take a seven-shot margin over the United States into Friday's final round in quest of a third girls' title in the past four Toyota Junior Golf World Cup editions.

"Because the USA team has the potential to go low just like (Wednesday's 131), it's still possible that they could overtake Japan," cautioned Araki, whose second 66 of the week also opened up a three-shot lead for individual honors.

The United States (409) and Korea (412) also managed to break the old 54-hole scoring mark, though both face an uphill battle to overtake the host nation.

"I think it's just going to be more of a mental thing than anything," said Anna Davis, who topped Team USA on Thursday with a bogey-free 68. "I think we'll be all right. It's golf, so anything can happen. Just go out there and try to make some birdies."

On the boys' side, Sato's 4-under-par 67 and a 68 from Taisho Moto helped Japan double its advantage to six shots over defending champion Canada. The host nation posted a 207 total on Thursday, while Canada's 210 was the only other team score to break par.

Japan reached the three-round checkpoint at 24-under 615, with Canada (621) the only team with a realistic chance of keeping the host nation from its first boys' championship since the 2015 edition.

"We don't need a 59," Canada coach Jeff McDonald was overheard telling his players, "but it wouldn't hurt."

Said Sato: “No one remembers who finishes second, so we want to make sure we get the victory.”

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.

After two days of mostly sunny, warm conditions, the overnight hours brought a cold front to Chukyo Golf Club that dropped temperatures from the mid-80s to near 70 degrees. Rain fell steadily on the Ishino course until about the time players began to make the turn.

“Honestly, it was a whole different game today,” said Jasmine Koo, a California native who surrendered the girls’ individual lead after a 74. “I’m not all that used to playing in the rain, then all this happened and things just didn’t come together.”

She had plenty of company on Thursday — though not so much from the Japanese ranks. June is in the middle of Japan’s rainy season, and conditions certainly seemed to work to their advantage.

“Because Japan players go through this every year, it is a bit of an advantage,” Araki said. “I feel being used to this weather definitely helped us.”

Canada’s Alex Zhang, who carded a 69, said embracing the conditions was “very important.”

“You can give up pretty easily, but you’ve just got to grind and play hard,” he said. “It’s the same for everybody.”

Thursday also marked the first time that the two biggest names in the field — U.S. Women’s Amateur champion Saki Baba of Japan and Davis, who won the 2022 Augusta National Women’s Amateur — had ever been drawn together in the same pairing. Both rose to the occasion with matching 68s.

“I had seen her at other events before,” Baba said, “so I was very excited and looking forward to seeing what Anna was like.”

Davis, for her part, didn't realize she was paired with Baba until she arrived at Thursday's first tee and saw her there.

"I just (keep track of) my tee time, but I've wanted to play with her," the Californian said. "We have very similar games — we just hit fairways, we hit greens, we two-putt and we move on. She's very steady."

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 the championship, while eight girls' teams advanced.

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=615 (-24)
2. Canada	209-202-210=621 (-18)
3. Germany	207-204-215=626 (-13)
t4. United States	207-206-216=629 (-10)
t4. Korea	206-210-213=629 (-10)
6. England	208-211-220=639 (E)
7. Paraguay	211-206-225=642 (+3)
8. Chile	218-219-212=649 (+10)
9. New Zealand	211-213-228=652 (+13)
10. South Africa	216-219-222=657 (+18)
11. Puerto Rico	223-227-224=674 (+35)
12. Uganda	234-232-239=705 (+66)

### **GIRLS TEAM STANDINGS**

1. Japan                    132-136-134=402 (-30)
2. United States        139-131-139=409 (-23)
3. Korea                    138-136-138=412 (-20)
4. New Zealand        142-139-139=420 (-12)
5. Colombia            143-136-145=424 (-8)
6. Canada                143-141-143=427 (-5)
7. Spain                    138-146-145=429 (-3)
8. South Africa        148-143-145=436 (+4)

### **BOYS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS**

1. Kaito Sato, Japan                    65-70-67=202 (-11)
2. Jaewon Lee, Korea                    66-69-68=203 (-10)
3. Taishi Moto, Japan                    69-67-68=204 (-9)
4. Phillipp Macionga, Germany        66-68-72=206 (-7)
5. Billy Davis, United States        66-68-73=207 (-6)
- t6. Alex Zhang, Canada                70-69-69=208 (-5)
- t6. Nils-Levi Bock, Germany        69-69-70=208 (-5)
- t8. Reo Maruo, Japan                    65-72-72=209 (-4)
- t8. Ethan Wilson, Canada                68-68-73=209 (-4)
- t8. Dylan Shaw-Radford, England        67-69-73=209 (-4)

### **GIRLS INDIVIDUAL LEADERS**

1. Yuna Araki, Japan                    66-70-66=202 (-14)
2. Yeonju An, Korea                    69-68-68=205 (-11)
- t3. Jasmine Koo, United States        66-66-74=206 (-10)
- t3. Anna Davis, United States        73-65-68=206 (-10)
- t5. Saori Iijima, Japan                    66-68-73=207 (-9)
- t5. Jiwoo Shin, Korea                    69-68-70=207 (-9)
- t5. Saki Baba, Japan                    71-68-68=207 (-9)
8. Maria Jose Marin, Colombia        66-70-73=209 (-7)
9. Fiona Xu, New Zealand                70-71-69=210 (-6)
- t10. Anna Cañado, Spain                66-73-72=211 (-5)
- t10. Vanessa Borovilos, Canada        71-70-70=211 (-5)