

Chuan Leong fined for selling fake golf clubs

Local sporting goods retailer ordered to pay \$12,600 for sale of counterfeit products bearing 'S-Yard' trademarks

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THIS could be your day to win the big one. You choose a three-iron and take aim at the pin. The gallery is quiet, the atmosphere tense.

The ball flies — then veers too far left. Then, a tell-tale plop as it falls into a water trap.

Maybe you should blame your golf clubs.

Yesterday, Seiko Corporation, the Japanese manufacturer of S-Yard golfing clubs — a favourite with golfing af-

pitching wedge from the S-Yard U-II range of golf clubs.

He also chose a putter, three covers and a golf bag.

Total cost: \$1,500.

However, buying the real McCoy from Transview Holdings — the sole official distributor in the region — would have cost five times as much, or about \$7,700.

And golfing enthusiasts say similar fakes can be had for a mere \$400 in Shanghai.

According to Seiko's statement to the court, when the investigator went to Chuan

Leong on July 2, it had no stock of the golf clubs he asked for and so he made a deposit of \$500 to confirm the purchase.

Three weeks later, on July 24, the investigator collected the sample purchases.

When these were tested by Mr Tan Choon Seng, a representative of Seiko, he "found them to be counterfeit golf clubs not manufactured or licensed by Seiko".

Seiko's lawyers here, Wong & Leow LLC, said that Chuan Leong "has not shown that it has taken all reasonable precautions against committing the offence or that it had acted innocently".

Yesterday, the law firm warned that Seiko will be vigilant against infringement of

its intellectual property rights and will not hesitate to take legal action against its infringers.

In an October 2002 report in a local golf publication, Mr Tan Ching Koon, executive chairman of mainboard-listed Transview, was quoted as saying: "Seiko has a very tight quality control and distribution channel... Furthermore, the real ones... have a serial number embedded and can be easily traced".

He advised golfers that if the new clubs are out of their reach, original secondhand clubs are also a good alternative.

Chuan Leong could not be reached for comment.

PAYING THE PRICE

CHUAN Leong was busted after a private investigator hired by Seiko paid \$1,500 for:

- ◆ Three woods;
- ◆ Nine irons;
- ◆ A sand wedge;
- ◆ A pitching wedge
- ◆ A putter;
- ◆ Three covers; and
- ◆ A golf bag.

Buying the real McCoy from sole regional distributor Transview Holdings would have cost five times as much, or about \$7,700.