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NMI golfer Sasaki Oliver had goose bumps at one point in the Pro-Am tournament of the 2006 Johnnie Walker Classic. "At first it was scary because I was playing with the pros and a lot of people came out to see us play," said Oliver, who represented the commonwealth to Asia's richest golf tournament last weekend in Perth, Australia.

"But I told myself that I had traveled a long way to be here so I just played my game," he added.

Oliver shot a decent seven-over par 79, 3-strokes better than the 82 Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho scored in 2005. But he was apologetic and had hope to do better than 79.

"I am sorry I played poorly. The course was in perfect condition. However, it's long and narrow, but that's no excuse. It was certainly different from our course here. I had a hard time playing off the tee and approaching the greens,"

Oliver said.

The Pro-Am tournament was played at Vines Resort and Country Club, which is Western Australia's premier golf course. The Vines was designed by Graham Marsh and Ross Watson and has two courses, the Ellenbrooke and Lakes, which are both par-72, 7,100-yard courses.

Oliver did not say on which course he played.

"I had to hit long and straight to avoid obstacles like sand traps, trees and the rough," said Oliver, who thanked his wife Chrsitina and children Nate, Zachary, Rocky and Annika for their support.

"On the greens, it was a totally different story. It was so smooth, so fast and I like to call it potato chips. They have an uneven surface causing me to three putt four times," he added.

Oliver teamed up with Australia's Peter Anthony O'Malley, who is the world's No. 150 player and has won six tournaments.

The duo shot a combined five-under 67.

"I asked Mr. O'Malley to keep my individual scores and he was kind enough to help me around the course layout since it was my first time to be in Australia," Oliver said.

Prior to the Pro-Am event, the local golfer had the chance to meet some of the world's best players during the event's cocktail party. Among them was England's fast-rising star Ian Poulter.

Poulter placed fifth in the JWC tying last year's winner Adam Scott of Australia. The mainland's Kevin Stadler won this year's JWC.

"I had the rare opportunity to hang out with the pros. That was fun. I asked some of them about their schedule in 24 hours. Eight hours of work, eight hours play and eight hours rest," Oliver said.

The local golfer earned a ticket to the Pro-Am tournament after topping last year's Championship Flight of Saipan's Tournament of Champions. The JWC slot was raffled off among flight champions and Oliver was the lucky winner. Oliver returned to Saipan last Monday and had a lot of people to thank for supporting his JWC trip. They were fellow golfer Camacho and Alex Aquiningoc, Ben Babauta, Ray Camacho, DFS Saipan, Martin Duenas of MVA, Joey Alcaraz and Ancher of Holiday Market.

"Playing at JWC was a great experience and now I am eager to turn pro and play golf like the pros. I learned that we (amateurs) can play with the big boys. We just need a lot of practice and consistency in our game," he added.