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Kirmani enjoys golf more than cricket

The former India stumper says cricket no longer remains a gentleman's game while golf is still played by gentlemen



Syed Kirmani

PRASANTH MENON

Syed Kirmani, wicketkeeper-batsman of the World Cup winning Indian team, played in the inaugural Test match at Motera in 1983. Twenty eight years later, as the Kensville golf course in Ahmedabad is set to host the first ever European Challenge tournament in India, he is there to be part of that historic event as well.

The 61-year old former stumper will be taking part in the Pro-Am event on Wednesday which acts as a prelude to the European Challenge. He was invited to play in the Pro Am tournament by Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

"I had met the chief minister last month during Muharram. When he learnt that I play golf, he invited me to be a part of this historic occasion. He had also invited Kapil Dev and Roger Binny for the event but due to prior commitments they couldn't make it," said Kirmani.

FIRST SWING

KIRMANI RECOLLECTS his first tryst with golf was way back in 1979. "I went to a golf course in Lahore during India's tour of Pakistan along with Erapalli Prasanna, the former Indian off-spinner. I remember Taimur Hasan, Pakistan's leading international golfer of the time speaking passionately about the game at the Lahore golf course. But it is only after I retired from cricket that I started to play the game more," recalled Kirmani.

NATURE LOVER

BEING A nature lover it was only natural that Kirmani took to the game of golf. "This is a game closely associated with nature and I enjoy playing it more than cricket," he said.

Despite carving a niche for himself on the cricket field, Kirmani feels golf is a more difficult game to play than cricket. "It is easier to hit a moving ball for four or a six. But it is more difficult to hit a small stationary ball straight," explained the former Indian stumper.

Popularly known as Kiri in his playing days, the 61-year old former Karnataka player also took a dig at cricket. "Cricket was known as a gentleman's game. But I think it is no longer the case. An example is the fines they have to impose on players for indecent behaviour on the field. But I think golf is still played by gentlemen," concluded Kirmani.