

Pics: Piyush Patel/DNA

Says Sharmila Nicollet, the new poster girl of Indian golf

'We can CATCH UP with the EUROPEANS'

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

European women golfers are far more skilful and technically correct than Indian players of the old Scottish game, but it is not impossible to catch up with them, remarked Sharmila Nicollet, who became the youngest Indian woman to seal the final card for the 2012 Ladies European Tour last week in Spain.

Acknowledging the feats of the new poster girl of women's golf in India, Kensville Golf and Country Club has offered the Bangalore beauty life membership.

"There is a vast difference between our game and the one the Europeans play. Their putting and ability to score birdies is amazing. Even teenage girls are capable of beating seasoned golfers," she said before adding, "We can compete with them. It is not impossible. We will need some time as golf is just catching up in our country." Sharmila attended a clinic at Kensville on Wednesday. There the Bangalorean shared her experience and passed on some advice to Ahmedabad's women golfers. "I had a good time. They asked me about technical aspects of the game, how to grip and swing. There are lot of girls willing to try it," she said.

When asked about the golf scenario in India and the contribution of Jeev Milkha Singh and Shiv Kapur, the 20-year-old said, "We do have the second generation of men golfers ready. But that is not the case with women. Girls are not willing to accept golf as a career. Hopefully, I will be able to change their perception," said Sharmila, who will be participating in tournaments Down Under next month.



First Indian to win a Challenger Tour event in its 23-year history is hoping for some "history-repeating," but the field is tough

Bhullar banking on last year's experience

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

Gaganjeet Bhullar will be banking on his previous year's experience at the Kensville Golf Course to successfully defend his Gujarat Kensville Challenge Trophy which gets under way at the scenic venue on Thursday.

With an improved field this year, which includes one of India's top golfers, Shiv Kapur, as well as young American Peter Uihlein who makes his professional debut after a glittering amateur career, Bhullar is expected to face tough competition.

Bhullar admitted that defending his title will be no walk in the park. But the first Indian to win a Challenger Tour event in its 23-year history is hoping for some "history-repeating" this week.

"Last year was amazing. It was my first ever appearance on the Challenger Tour, and winning it gave me a lovely feeling. I vividly remember all the four rounds; I enjoyed it and hopefully it will be a case of 'history-repeating' this year. This is my second tournament at Kensville and I know all the corners and greens at this course. Moreover, this course has improved a lot. Last year there were a few dry patches, but this year the greens are true and fast," the 23-year-old said.

Some of the other Indians in the



Gaganjeet Bhullar

fray are Rahul Gangjee, who recently finished second on the Asian Tour Qualifying School, Chiragh Kumar, winner of the PGTI's Order of merit in 2011 and Manav Jaini, who stood second at the Panasonic Open (India) last year. Home favourite Kapur, who narrowly missed keeping his European Tour card, feels that even on the developmental Challenger Tour, it's a tough test.

"It's not going to be easy," Kapur said after playing a practice round. "It's a good field and it is good for Indians to have such events in our country because it gives our players a great chance to test themselves against international players. The only way to improve your game is to play with players who are better and more experienced than you; so, hopefully, the Indian guys here this week will

take a lot from the tournament."

Among the visitors, Daniel Vancsik, with two European Tour titles and three Challenger Tour wins, is the most decorated player present but the likes of John Parry and Oscar Henningson, both winners on The European Tour, will enter the new season harbouring hopes of a return to the big stage via the Challenge Tour Rankings.

Meanwhile, one player with similar ambitions but with experience far lesser than the others is Peter Uihlein, the 22-year-old who has caused quite a stir on both sides of the Atlantic as an amateur, impressing in the first round of the 2011 Masters Tournament before making the cut at The Open Championship later in the year.

Dream comes true for Amdavadi teens

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

A dream came true for three teenage Amdavadis who aspire to become professional golfers in the future, at the Pro-Am event held on the eve of the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2012 at Kensville in the city on Wednesday.

Varun Parikh, Karan Malik and Sahil Motiani got an opportunity to play alongside Philip Archer and learn some tricks of the trade from the English golfer. And, they finished with a respectable team score of 12 under par.

"The best part of today's game was he (Archer) focused not on his, but our game. It was a great learning experience. Whenever we



Varun Parikh, Karan Malik and Sahil Motiani were pleased with their 13th place at the Pro-Am event

made mistakes, whether it was while swinging or putting, Archer was quick to rectify it. We received some thorough professional les-

sons from him," said an excited Sahil after the trio's 18-hole journey with the Englishman.

The 16-year-old Karan said he

wasn't comfortable with his swing -- before Wednesday. "My swing wasn't good. He saw it and helped me correct it. He even taught us how much to bend and where the left shoulder should be while putting," said Karan, who termed it as 'life-time' tips.

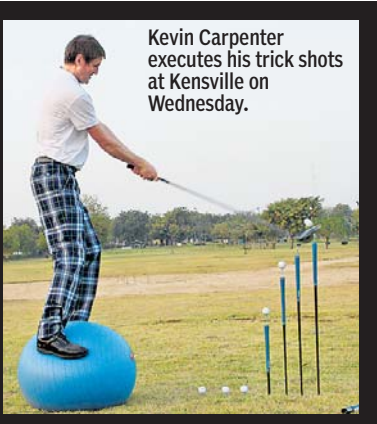
Varun, the hole-in-one star last year, got an invaluable tip on how to control the ball on the greens.

Meanwhile, Archer also showered praises on the young Amdavadis. "They are good, but they need to improve in a few areas. They are hitting the long balls well, but their putting needs some fine-tuning. They need to work on their basics. I can say they have a great future ahead of them," said Archer, who is a three-time winner in the Challenger Tour.

The young Amdavadi team finished a creditable 13th in the 24-team event.



Kevin Carpenter executes his trick shots at Kensville on Wednesday.



SHARP SINGLES

Vaidik beats Shabaz Khan, India No. 29

Ahmedabad's Vaidik Munshaw gained an entry to the main draw of 20 by overcoming Shabaz Khan, India ranked 29, in a tough encounter 6-4 4-7 7-6 at the AITA men's Secunderabad club open Rs5.5 lakh tourney. Later on, teaming with Shabaz Khan in

doubles, the duo beat the pair of V Vignesh & Amit 6-0 7-6 to reach the quarterfinal.

Sunrise win on basis of 1st inning lead

Sunrise Club beat Sarasvati CC on the basis of first innings lead in the Gordhandas Cup - Major (2011-12) played at the MG Science College. Batting first, SCC's innings was built around Vaibhav Sevak's knock of 52 and Dhaval Prajapati's contribution of 34 runs and Kinjaly Shah's 32-run innings. For Sunrise, Meet Joshi took four wickets and Indranil three. In reply, Sunrise were notched up 368 in their first innings. Ruhan Tirmiz's knock of 146 runs was laced with 15 boundaries and Meet Joshi contributed 97 to the total. In the second innings, Sarasvati CC were 372/5 with Sandip Kaushik top scoring with an unbeaten 120 when stumps were drawn for the last time.

Rohana's foursome win Pro-Am event

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

While all eyes were on pro-debutant Peter Uihlein, it was Sri Lankan professional Anura Rohana who gave himself a good fillip on the eve of the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2012 at the Kensville Golf and Country Club on Wednesday. The Pro-Am competition precedes the main tournament that gets under way on Thursday.

Rohana, who plays on the Indian and Asian Tours, carried his team to a comprehensive victory in the Pro-Am. His team comprised Rohit Patel, Prem Kapoor and Haresh Parikh and

they aggregated 52 points ahead of the second-placed team led by Mukesh Kumar by four points.

Mukesh's team-mates were Alpesh Parikh, Anand Dave and Bhavesh Dave. Their team earned 56 points. Shiv Kapur's side, comprising Rajan Ghai, Sameer Sinha and Jigish Shah, finished seventh with 58 points.

American Peter Uihlein, who makes his professional debut on Thursday, had a great outing and played about seven-under to get himself ready for the main event.

In all, 24 teams took part in the Pro-Am which is traditionally held a day before the main event.



Gujarat teams bow out of National TT championships

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

The men's table tennis team from Gujarat went down to Tamil Nadu 2-3 after leading 2-0 in the semi-final of the 73rd senior national and inter-state table tennis championships. Devesh Karia beat Sourav Chakraborty 11-9 11-8 6-11 9-11 11-9 to hand Gujarat the advantage before Harmeet Desai doubled the lead thrashing Subham Choudhary 11-4 11-4 11-6. But Jignesh Jayswal then lost to Ranbir Das in straight games 8-11 5-11 5-11 before old warhorse Desai held his



nerves to overcome Sourav Chakraborty 11-9 4-11 5-11 14-12 11-9 and help Gujarat book a place in the last four. Against Tamil Nadu, Devesh Karia thumped RS Raja 11-7 11-9 11-6 to get Gujarat off to a solid start. Desai too wasted no time in crushing G Vinod 11-7 11-8 11-6 and Gujarat had all but sealed their place in the finals before

Tamil Nadu staged a remarkable fight back. In a closely-fought encounter, S Sheshadri beat Jignesh Jayswal 11-9 4-11 7-11 13-11 11-5 before RS Raja beat Harmit Desai 6-11 11-8 12-10 11-9 in four games to take the encounter into the decider where Devesh Karia ran out of steam against G Vinod 9-11 11-5 11-8 7-11 11-5.

RESULTS

Men's team quarterfinals

Gujarat def WB 3-1
Devesh Karia bt Sourav Chakraborty 11-9 11-8 6-11 9-11 11-9
Harmeet Desai bt Subham Choudhary 11-4 11-4 11-6
Jignesh Jayswal lost to Ranbir Das 8-11 5-11 5-11
Harmeet Desai bt Sourav Chakraborty 11-9 4-11 5-11 14-12 11-9.

Women's team quarterfinals

Maharashtra-A beat Gujarat 3-1
Mamta Prabhu beat Nargis Malubhai 11-4 11-7 11-5
Madhurika Patkar beat Sapna Sharma 11-6 11-6 11-5
Mallika Bhandarkar lost to Frenaz Chipiya 7-11 11-8 13-11 5-11 7-11
Madhurika Patkar beat Nargis Malubhai 11-9 11-4 12-10