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CAROLINE WANTS TO END YEAR ON A HIGH

By **Shaghi Bilal**
in Gurgaon

SWEDEN'S Caroline Hedwall is the latest sensation in women's golf, following her three title triumphs on the Ladies European Tour (LET) as a rookie this season.

Currently No. 3 in the money list of the LET, the 22-year-old Caroline will adorn the star-studded field of the Women's Indian Open golf tournament, starting at the DLF Golf and Country Club on Friday.

Although Caroline is surely the best bet to finish as the top rookie this season, she also hopes to make the most out of her presence in India and could finish runner-up in the overall rankings.

Caroline has total earnings of €234,645, behind England's Melissa Reid (€280,577) and Japanese No. 1 Ai Miyazaki (€353,679). Since €225,900 Indian Open is the penultimate event of the season - €500,000 Dubai Ladies Masters being the last - and overtaking Ai seems to be a long shot, but Caroline stands a good chance of finishing at No. 2. First, because she is not far behind Melissa and second because the English player and Ai are not playing at the Indian Open.

Caroline considers the Indian Open as an opportunity to achieve No. 2 rankings. "It would have been an ideal position to finish on top in my rookie year but that seems to be a distant reality as Ai Miyazaki is far ahead of me but I have a feeling that I can overtake Melissa if I play to my potential in India and cash in on it in Dubai," she said at the sidelines of the press conference which was followed by Champions Challenge, a precursor to the Indian Open, where the Asian team beat the European team.

Caroline is aware of the magnitude of challenge she is going to receive in India where an 81-time winner legendary English

golfer Laura Davies is coming back to defend her title.

"I know competition in India will be pretty tough where the likes of Laura Davies are playing. It will be test of game and I'll have to play my best golf in order to stay in contention," said Caroline who idolises her countrywoman and the most successful woman golfer ever - Annika Sorenstam.

"I haven't played a round at the DLF course so I can't say anything how it is going to be during the tournament. But long game has been my forte and it will suit to this course," she said.

Caroline has been a highly successful amateur and had her share of glory, finishing tied 27th at the 2010 British Open. She announced her arrival, clinching her professional debut tournament - the New South Wales Open - early this year before adding three more LET titles to her kitty.

The titles in the rookie year have boosted her appetite for success so, after spending a fruitful year on the LET, she is planning to shift her base to the US.

"When I started my professional career earlier this season, I intended to play my best game and success came naturally to me. I am enjoying my game with no specific target in mind. But at the same time I know I have to prove myself on different tours so I want to play in the US professional tour next season," she said.

STRONG INDIAN FIELD

The likes of Sharmila Nicollet, Nalini Singh, Sauriti Mehra and Neha Tripathi will represent the Indian field which will comprise of 13 professionals and seven amateurs. While the tournament will also see Laura Davies returning to defend her title, US tour regulars Christina Kim (USA), and a two-time champion Phattum Pornanong (Thailand), will add flavour to the colours. South African ace Lee Ann-Pace is also returning to the event and another bright prospect Rebecca Brewsterion will also make the field more competitive.



Sweden's Caroline Hedwall during the Skill Challenge competition at the DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurgaon on Tuesday

**Euro-
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