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Strongest-ever field for women's Indian Open

AMY CHANDHARY IN GURGAON

Last year, Laura Davies, a 14-year-old European (Ladies of March winner) got her golf bag minutes before the tee-off time but still managed to win the event.

With such interesting stories and poignant memories of last year's event to think about, all the golf lovers must be wishing for the 2011 Hero Women's Indian Open eagerly.

With the legendary Laura in the lead, the fifth edition of the event, a co-sanctioned event between the Ladies European Tour, the Ladies Asian Golf Tour and the Women's Golf Association to India, to be played at DLF Golf and Country Club here from December 9 to 11 will see the

strongest ever field to have assembled in the country.

Though the biggest star of the \$500,000 event, Davies might be someplace in transit, as she is expected to land in India later this evening, there was no dearth of talent and glamour at the pre-event conference as biggest European as well as Asian names graced the occasion.

To begin with, there will be Sweden's Caroline Hedwall, who, having already won three events this year and leading the race to become the FedEx of the Year, is currently placed at the third position on money list. But the Swede is not ready to stop and hoping to clinch her fourth trophy at the



Top Women golfers posing with the Hero Women's Indian Open 2011 trophy.

Indian Open this week to rise to the second spot. "It is one of those years where I didn't expect it to turn out to this way but it did. I played very good amateur golf and have seen three titles in my rookie year, which is amazing," said Hedwall, who was part of the Solheim Cup winning team for Europe.

"I am satisfied with this year and I'm hoping to have two good weeks and take

Melina down from the second place. It seems impossible to catch up with Ai (Miyazumi), so I am hoping to finish at least second," she added.

If Hedwall was there to charm with her achievement, there were Christina Kim (USA) and Seonni Mehra (India) to entertain you with their bubbles and interest. The Indian challenge will be led by Sharmila Bhambhani, the current leader on the observ-

ing Hero Women's Professional Golf Tour. Mehra and talented Nikita Singh Senesch.

"It has been a tough year for me. I changed my coach. I had some problem with my swing and had to change that as well. I am still working on my swing and hoping to get it right this weekend," Senesch said.

Being the most seasoned pro on Indian circuit, Mehra, who was also the first ever Indian woman golfer to play at the LPGA tour, advised all the young Indian players to see themselves as a 'representative' of the country.

"The most important thing for the young golfers to learn from this event is how to be a representative for not only themselves but also for your country," Mehra advised.

WITH LEGENDARY LAURA IN THE LEAD, THE FIFTH EDITION OF THE EVENT WILL SEE THE STRONGEST EVER FIELD TO HAVE ASSEMBLED IN THE COUNTRY

Photo: Photo