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12

इंडियन ओपन में फ्रेंच गोल्फर नोसेरा ने बनाई बढ़त

नई दिल्ली : फ्रांस की ग्वालडीसे, नोसेरा ने अंतिम तीन होल में बर्डी लगाते हुए हीरो महिला इंडिया ओपन गोल्फ टूर्नामेंट के पहले दौर में गुरुवार को नौ अंडर 64 का स्कोर बनाकर शीर्ष स्थान हासिल किया। हालांकि दिन का आकर्षण स्थानीय गोल्फर वैश्वी सिन्हा रही, जिन्होंने छह अंडर 67 का स्कोर बनाकर संयुक्त दूसरा स्थान हासिल किया। अन्य भारतीय गोल्फरों में वाणी कपूर संयुक्त दसवें स्थान पर चल रही हैं।

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Nocera leads the pack

PRIYANKA SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

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Vaishavi, who shared the second place along with England's Holly Clyburn, blasted nine birdies against three bogeys, while Nocera had a flawless round laced with an equal number of birdies.

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pro event, Vaishavi was however not surprised by her show on a course she had played nine years ago.

"During the practice rounds, I realised that the scores will go low if you putt well. The greens were true, so if you are reading the lines properly, you can get a good score," said the 23-year-old.

The 39-year-old Nocera played the tight course like a game of chess, plotting her way between the trees surrounding the fairways.

Defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura of Thailand opened with a 73 to stay alongside home golfers Gauri, Shweta Galande and Gursimar Badhwal in the fifth spot. Sharmila Nicolet and Vani Kapoor completed the Indian line-up in top 10, with two-under 70s.

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"The experience of playing on the Symetra Tour in the US also helped me grow as a player. I guess for a first-timer, it would have been pretty different. But I wasn't really surprised to see my name in the top of the leaderboard," she added.

The 39-year-old Nocera, who bettered Gauri Monga's five-under set in the 2010 Delhi Ladies Open, played the course like a game of chess, plotting her way between the trees surrounding the fairways.

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France's Nocera starts well

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Unheralded local professional Vaishavi Sinha also was in spotlight with a 6-under 67 to share second spot with Holly Clyburn of England.

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Defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura (70) shares the fifth spot with Liz Young of England, India's Gauri Monga, Sharmila Nicollet, Shweta Galande and Gursimar Badhwal.

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For equality, women golfers stand united

Kaushik Chatterji

kaushik.chatterji@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: With Wimbledon and French Open finally having come around, women have been competing for the same prize money as men for seven years now. At the final Grand Slam of the tennis calendar, the prize money has been the same for both sexes since 1973.

But while singles winners of the 2014 US Open pocketed a cool \$1,900,000 (₹12cr) each, there was a sizeable disparity in the earnings of their respective counterparts on the golf course. The \$1,620,000 (₹10cr) that Martin Kaymer took home in June isn't even the biggest paycheque in men's golf.

But the relatively measly \$720,000 (₹4.5cr) that Michelle Wie won the following week is the best that women's golf has to offer. Unlike tennis, golf is yet to bridge the gender gap. Even access to playing facilities is often an issue. It took Condoleezza Rice, former US Secretary of State, for Augusta National, the golf

club that hosts The Masters, to finally grant membership to a woman.

So, when Ladies European Tour (LET), ahead of the Women's Indian Open, asked its members about their hopes for the next 10 years, the responses came as no surprise.

While Gwladys Nocera, 2008 LET Order of Merit winner, said she wants to see "everybody respecting women athletes", Caroline Martens, on Instagram, mentioned tennis as a model for equality.

Other demands were simpler, like Kiran Matharu asking for more events to be held simultaneously, like Trophée Hassan II (men) and Lalla Meryem Cup (women), or Holly Aitchison hoping for "equal TV coverage".

Equal pay in tennis was a culmination of a series of events, including the Battle of Sexes. Along with Augusta and St Andrews admitting women, the #Next10years campaign is a welcome addition to the chorus asking for equality on the golfing greens.

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Vaishavi making up for lack of avenues

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NEW DELHI: It's half past five in the evening. A soon-to-be 24-year-old, under the watchful eye of her father, is busy trying to iron out the chinks in her short game. It's getting dark, she has to tee off early Friday morning — 7.25am, to be precise — and home is still a long drive away. But she doesn't seem too perturbed. And not without reason — having spent six years on the other side of the globe, Noida must feel like a stone's throw away from central Delhi.

Search the Symetra Tour website for Vaishavi Sinha, though, and nothing shows up. On the LPGA's official developmental tour, she's known as Kishi. The nickname is what she answered to even during her five years at Purdue. The reason, says dad Alok, is simple: "Americans can't pronounce Vaishavi. Even Kishi is too much for them, so they just call her Kish!"

Golf scholarships in the US typically last four years. Sinha, however, was redshirted (an option exercised to extend one's stay by a year) and remained a college amateur for five.

After six years of slogging it out with fellow LPGA Tour hopefuls — Sinha turned pro at the start of 2014 — Vaishavi isn't overawed by the occasion. "I'm used to playing big events," she says after carding a six-under-par 67 on the opening day of the Women's Indian Open. Mental conditioning is just one aspect, though. Competing on a foreign tour thousands of miles away is a costly affair.

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LEADERBOARD

64: Gwladys Nocera,
67: Holly Clyburn, Vaishavi Sinha;
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फ्रांसीसी गोल्फर नोसेरा को इंडिया ओपन में बढ़त

नई दिल्ली, 4 दिसंबर (भाषा)। फ्रांस की ग्वालाडीज नोसेरा ने अंतिम तीन होल में बड़ी बनायी जिससे वह दिल्ली गोल्फ क्लब में खेली जा रही तीन लाख डालर इनामी हीरो महिला इंडिया ओपन गोल्फ टूर्नामेंट में नी अंडर 64 की स्वर्णिम शुरुआत करने में सफल रही। नोसेरा अभी शीर्ष पर है लेकिन स्थानीय खिलाड़ी वैशवी सिन्हा ने भी लोगों का ध्यान अपनी तरफ खींचा। उन्होंने छह अंडर 67 का कार्ड बनाया और वे इंग्लैंड की होली क्लाइबर्न के साथ संयुक्त दूसरे स्थान पर हैं।

मौजूदा चैंपियन तिडापा सुवानापुरा इंग्लैंड की लिज यंग और भारत की मोंगा गौरी, शर्मिला निकोलेट, जी श्वेता और बदवाल गुरसिमार के साथ संयुक्त पांचवें स्थान पर हैं। इन सभी का स्कोर तीन अंडर 70 है।

Vaishavi three shots off pace

PRYANKA SHARMA

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Nocera blazes to course record

By Shaghil Bilal
In New Delhi

FRENCH golfer Gwladys Nocera holds the distinction of winning the first-ever Ladies European Tour (LET) event in India, when she won the Indian Masters in 2007. On Thursday, she shot into contention for her second title in the country when she set a ladies' course record of nine-under 64 in the first round of the Hero Indian Open, and established a three-stroke lead at the par-73 Delhi Golf Club (DGC).

While the Frenchwoman took the course by storm in the morning session, Noida girl Vaishnavi Sinha created a buzz in the evening with a six-under 67, and ended the first round in tied second position with Englishwoman Holly Clyburn, who fired four birdies on her first five holes.

Other Indians also made most of the home conditions. Gauri Monga, playing her first pro tournament at her home club, Shweta Galande and Gursimar Badhwal fired three-under 70s each to hold tied fifth position with defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura of Thailand.



Gwladys Nocera

Coming after an injury lay-off, Sharmila Nicollet started her game well but a double bogey and a bogey within the last four holes forced her to post a two-under 71. She, however, managed to squeeze into the top-10 and shared the 10th position with domestic tour No.1 Vani Kapoor.

Reduced yardages for the tournament and benign course conditions helped Nocera begin all guns blazing. The 39-year-old golfer rifled 10 birdies and dropped just a bogey on her way into the history books. Her score bettered the previous record by an astonishing four strokes.

Nocera, who has 12 victories to her name on the LET, gave credit to her cautious approach on a narrow course like DGC. "You can be offensive on this course if you want, but the risk is big," said Nocera, who recorded her most recent win in China last November. "I felt like I was playing chess, you place the ball and then when you have the opportunity to hit close to the pin you try your best; all the time."s



Indian Press Clearing

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SPORTS BAR

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FRENCH GOLFER NOCERA TAKES LEAD IN WOMEN'S INDIA OPEN

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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under 70. Nocera, 39, the current leader of the Order of Merit on the Ladies European Tour (LET), is no stranger to India, having won the first ever LET event in Bangalore in 2008.

Thursday, she declared that the par-73 Delhi Golf Club, is one of her favourites. She said: "I played well, everything went well and got all I wanted my way."

"I played as if I was playing a chess game. My moves were good, my thinking was right and this kept me going confidently," said Nocera.

Starting on the back nine, Nocera's flawless round included birdies on the 2nd, 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th 11th, 14th, 15th and 18th.

Vaishavi three shots off pace

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France's Gwladys Nocera

Nocera in the lead

Uthra Ganesan

NEW DELHI: With a new course record on the first day of the competition, Gwladys Nocera set herself up as the frontrunner to win the eighth Hero women's Indian Open golf tournament at the Delhi Golf Club here on Thursday.

The 39-year-old Frenchwoman shot a nine-under 64 on the par 73 course to sit pretty on top of the leaderboard after Round One as the shortened yardage made the DGC, considered among the tightest courses in the country, easier for the top professionals in the fray.

England's Holly Clyburn and local hope Vaishvi Sinha were tied second three shots behind while defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura of Thailand, playing in the same group as Gwladys, was placed in a five-way tie at fifth spot with a three-under 70 score. Four Indians finished in the top-10, making it a fruitful day for local favourites.

Early start

With winter yet to set in and hardly any fog or dew, the early morning start helped players hold a steady line on the greens. Gwladys, who teed off on the 10th hole, did not drop a shot through the day and made four birdies on the 11th, 14th, 15th and 18th holes before adding five more on the front nine, including three consecutive ones from the seventh to ninth holes.

Among the Indians Vaishvi, playing her first year on the professional circuit, impressed with strong putts for a six-under 67 including birdies on the



Gwladys Nocera.

first four holes. A late start meant she had to face windy conditions. She bogied the 10th, 13th and 16th holes but managed to keep her short game consistent.

Among other Indians, Gauri Monga, Shweta Galande and Gursimar Badhwal were tied fifth on 3-under 70.

The scores: 64: Gwladys Nocera (Fra); 67: Holly Clyburn (Eng), Vaishvi Sinha (Ind); 69: Chloe Leurquin (Bel); 70: Thidapa Suwannapura (Tha), Liz Young (Eng), Gauri Monga (Ind), Shweta Galande (Ind), Gursimar Badhwal (Ind); 71: Sharmila Nicolle (Ind), Vani Kapoor (Ind), Carlota Ciganda (Esp), Bo-Mi Suh (Kor), Hannah Burke (Eng), Fabienne In-Albon (Sui), Titiya Plucksatopom (Tha).

72: Sahra Hassan (Wal), Hyeon Seo Kang (Kor), Saraporn Chamchoi (Tha), Linda Wessberg (Swe), Stefania Croce (Ita), Wichanee Meechal (Tha).

73: Ye Seul Lee (Kor), Stephanie Kirchmayr (Ger), Alison Whitaker (Aus), Amy Boulden (Wal), Beth Allen (USA), Smriti Mehra (Ind), Kanphaninan Muangkhumsakul (Tha), Sophie Sandolo (Ita), Nina Hollender (Ger), Sally Watson (Sco).

French golfer takes lead

- ▶ France's Gwladys Nocera birdied the final three holes on her way to a dream start with a 9-under 64 to lead in the first round of the \$300,000 Hero Women's India Open at the par-73 Delhi Golf Club, on Thursday. However, unheralded local professional Vaishavi Sinha stole the show when she submitted her scorecard of 6-under 67 to share second spot with Holly Clyburn of England. Defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura shares the fifth spot with Liz Young of England, India's Monga Gauri, Shamila Nicolette and Galande Shweta and Badhwal Gursimar on 3-under 70.

Nocera takes lead, Vaishavi shares second spot with Clyburn

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 4 December

Unheralded Vaishavi Sinha spearheaded Challenge as she hit superb six-under 67 to be tied joint second with Holly Clyburn while France's Gwladys Nocera stole the limelight by scorching the Delhi Golf Club course to return a card of nine-under 64 in the opening round of the \$300,000 Hero Women's Indian Open here today.

Nocera, 39, set a new one-day course record erasing Gauri Monga's five under which the Indian golfer set in the second round of the 2010 Delhi Ladies Open.

With Gauri Monga, Shweta Galande and Sharmila Nicolle finishing the first round in tied fifth at three-under 70, the leaderboard looks pretty top-heavy with Indians. Defending Hero Women's Indian Open champion, Thidapa Suwannapura of Thailand, too is lying in tied fifth place. Adopting a conservative approach, Suwannapura, sunk in five birdies along with two bogies.

However, the revelation of the day was the young golfer from Noida, Vaishavi Sinha who turned pro earlier this year. She finished the round on a high 67 that put her in tied second spot alongside Holly Clyburn of Belgium. Playing only in her sixth pro tournament in the country Vaishavi sunk in nine birdies, but bogies on 10th, 13th and 16th pulled her score down in the final count. She too bettered Monga's record.

The Indian credited her string of good performances in the tournaments in the run up to the Hero Women's Indian Open to the experience gleaned from playing in the Symetra Tour, which

is the feeder series to the LPGA.

"Of course, the experience of playing in the US has helped me today," she said.

Though Vaishavi had an average iron game, it was her putting that stood out resulting in four back-to-back birdies in the first four holes, with another five spread over 9th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 18th.

Meanwhile playing on the narrow tree-lined course that puts a heavy premium on accuracy, Nocera landed her tee shots in perfect spots on the fairways, which helped her to find the pins with relative ease. Her blemish-free scorecard for the day reflected her precise club play as she sunk a total of nine birdies of which five came in the front nine and four in the back nine. With 12 wins on the Ladies European Tour, the French golfer is looking on course to chalk up her first victory on Indian soil.

"It was a really good day. I hit the ball well, close to the pin and it's really nice to start the tournament like this. I didn't think about my score, just each shot and where to hit the shot, which spot is safe and try to play smart. The course is tricky, there are some difficult shots to hit but everything went well. I was reading the greens well, with the help of my caddie, we both worked on the lines together. It was not windy this morning, so it was okay. The course is in great condition and suits me. You have to be accurate with everything because it's pretty narrow. Off the tees is the first thing and then you have to hit the greens. The greens are nice and get quicker during the day with the heat. They were like this morning," said Nocera.



Nocera in lead

■ **New Delhi:** Gwladys Nocera birdied the final three holes on her way to a dream start with a 9-under 64 to lead in the first round of the \$300,000 Hero Women's India Open, at the par-73 Delhi Golf Club, here on Thursday. India's Vaishavi Sinha (6-under 67) shared second spot with Holly Clyburn of England.

Nocera shoots to the top

France's Gwladys Nocera started with a 9-under 64 to lead in the first round of the \$300,000 Hero Women's India Open in New Delhi on Thursday. However, unheralded local professional Vaishavi Sinha stole the show when she submitted her scorecard of 6-under 67 to share second spot with Holly Clyburn of England. Defending champion Thidapa Suwannapura shares the fifth spot with Liz Young of England, India's Monga Gauri, Sharmila Nicolette and Galande Shweta and Badhwal Gursimar on 3-under 70.

Gwladys sets the tone on first day

New Delhi: France's Gwladys Nocera struck red-hot form as she scorched the Delhi Golf Club course to return a card of nine-under 64 in the opening round of the Hero Women's Indian Open on Thursday. However, the revelation of the day was India's Vaishavi Sinha.

The young golfer from Noida, who turned pro earlier this year, finished the first round on a high with a six-under 67 that puts her in tied second spot alongside Holly Clyburn of Belgium. Playing only in her sixth pro tournament in India, Vaishavi sunk in nine birdies, but bogies on 10th, 13th and 16th pulled her score down in the final count.

Gauri Monga, Shewta Galande, Sharmila Nicollet and

defending champion, Thidapa Suwannapura of Thailand, were tied in the fifth place.

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**France's Nocera takes lead at
Women's India Open**

New Delhi: France's Gwladys Nocera birdied the final three holes on her way to a dream start with a 9-under 64 to lead in the first round of the US\$300,000 Hero Women's India Open at the par-73 Delhi Golf Club, here on Thursday.

However, unheralded local professional Vaishavi Sinha stole the show when she submitted her scorecard of 6-under 67 to share second spot with Holly Clyburn of England. ¶¶

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नोसेरा को बढ़त

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा)। फ्रांस की ग्वालाडीज नोसेरा ने अंतिम तीन होल्ड में बर्डी बनायी जिससे वह दिल्ली गोल्फ क्लब में खेली जा रही तीन लाख डालर इनामी हीरो महिला इंडिया ओपन गोल्फ टूर्नामेंट में नौ अंडर 64 को स्वर्णिम शुरुआत करने में सफल रही।

Vaishavi making up for lack of avenues

Kaushik Chatterji

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NEW DELHI: It's half past five in the evening. A soon-to-be 24-year-old, under the watchful eye of her father, is busy trying to iron out the chinks in her short game. It's getting dark, she has to tee off early Friday morning — 7.25am, to be precise — and home is still a long drive away. But she doesn't seem too perturbed. And not without reason — having spent six years on the other side of the globe, Noida must feel like a stone's throw away from central Delhi.

Search the Symetra Tour website for Vaishavi Sinha, though, and nothing shows up. On the LPGA's official developmental tour, she's known as Kishi. The nickname is what she answered to even during her five years at Purdue. The reason, says dad Alok, is simple: "Americans can't pronounce Vaishavi. Even Kishi is too much for them, so they just call her Kish!"

Golf scholarships in the US typically last four years. Sinha, however, was redshirted (an option exercised to extend one's stay by a year) and remained a college amateur for five. After six years of slogging it out with fellow LPGA Tour hopefuls — Sinha turned pro at the start of 2014 — Vaishavi isn't overawed by the occasion. "I'm used to playing big events," she says after carding a six-under-par 67 on the opening day of the Women's Indian Open.

Mental conditioning is just one

LEADERBOARD

64: Gwladys Nocera,
67: Holly Clyburn, Vaishavi Sinha; **69:** Chloe Leurquin;
70: Liz Young, Thidapa Suwannapura, Shweta Galande, Gauri Monga, Gursimar Badhwal

aspect, though. Competing on a foreign tour thousands of miles away is a costly affair. And, with the prize money on offer on the second-tier women's golf tour in the US not much (all but three tournaments are in the \$100,000-125,000 range), making the cut isn't enough in the long run. While she has retained her card for 2015, this year, Vaishavi, by making eight cuts in 16 events, earned only \$6,735 (₹4 lakh).

The finances are definitely at the back of Alok's mind. "For now, we're taking care of it," he says, admitting that the future depends on his daughter's results. And, Alok adds with his fingers crossed, sponsorship. Winning her national Open on her birthday, then, could be the best gift Kishi can give herself.

LEADING THE WAY

With a nine-under 64, Gwladys Nocera did not just take a three-stroke lead after Rd 1. The French golfer set a new course record for ladies at the Delhi Golf Club, eclipsing then-amateur Gauri Monga's five-under 67, set during the Delhi Ladies Open in Nov 2010.

Vaishavi making up for lack of avenues

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