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Vaishavi, who was in sole second spot after two rounds, suffered a meltdown on the 18th hole in which she double bogeyed to slip to sole fifth place on the final leaderboard.

For her second win in India, Nocera had to work hard on the final day to win the glittering trophy and the winner's cheque of USD 45,000.

The first one came in 2007 in the Emmar-MGF Ladies Masters.

"It's always good to win, I love it, and it's nice to win in India for a second time, so I'm really pleased. It worked out really well the first day and after that I tried to play my game and that's it," Nocera said. —PTI

# **NOCERA WINS** **INDIAN OPEN**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

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France's Gwladys Nocera rolled back the years to clinch her 13th Ladies European Tour title — her first of the season — at the eighth edition of the \$300,000 Hero Women's Indian Open golf tournament at the Delhi Golf Course here on Saturday. Though it was a wire-to-wire victory for the 39-year-old from Moulins, she had to overcome a slight blip of form in the final round to manage an one-under 72, enough to give a five-stroke win over Korea's Hyeon Seo Kang (72, 72, 69), Fabienne In-Albon of Switzerland (71, 73, 69) and England's Hannah Burke (71, 71, 71). The trio finished in the second place,

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# Wire-to-wire finish for Nocera

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Vaishavi (67, 71, 76), who at one stage trailed the leader by just a stroke, looked well on course to claim the runner-up place before she ruined her chances taking out her driver for the 18th hole.

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watching and I wanted to hit it far. It's a par five, so you want to be two on the greens.

"It was more to do with the mental aspect than the physical. I think this will come with experience," said the 24-year-old adding that "her putter was off on the day".

Nocera (64, 72, 72), overnight leader by two strokes, later said that her experience on the LET circuit and "brilliant ball striking ability" on the final day came to her rescue. The win made the 12-time LET winner, who last won in China last November, richer by

\$45,000.

"It's always good to win. I love it, and it's nice to win in India for a second time, so I'm really pleased. It worked out really well the first day and after that I tried to play my game and that's it. I got nervous, or a little bit frustrated, about my putting. But I stayed patient and it paid off," said Nocera, who sank five birdies against three bogeys.

DGC golfer Gauri Monga, playing her first pro tournament, signed off eighth with a three-day total of 217. Sixteen-year-old Aditi Ashok was the best amateur of the event with a total of 219, finishing in the tied 13th place.

# Nocera overcomes blip to clinch title

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India's Vaishavi Sinha, who was in sole second spot after two rounds, suffered a meltdown on the 18th hole in which she double bogeyed to slip to sole fifth place on the final leaderboard.

For her second win in India, Nocera had to work hard on the final day to win the glittering trophy and the winner's cheque of USD 45,000. The first one came in 2007 in the Emmar-MGF Ladies Masters. The number

two ranked golfer on the 2014 LET Order of Merit started the day on a positive note when she birdied the second hole.

But two bogeys on the fifth and ninth holes blemished her card on the front nine. Nocera picked her game on the back nine by birding the 11th, 12th and 17th holes against one bogey on the 15th hole.

"It's always good to win, I love it, and it's nice to win in India for a second time, so I'm re-

ally pleased. It worked out really well the first day and after that I tried to play my game and that's it," she said.

Sinha, who eschewed risks in the decisive round, looked set to finish as a worthy runner-up in India's most prestigious women's golf tournament, but on the 18th hole, she pulled out the driver in her quest to find a few extra yards, but only managed to hit the ball off the tee into the bushes.

# नोसेरा ने जीता इंडियन ओपन

नई दिल्ली। फ्रांस की ग्वेलाडिस नोसेरा ने शनिवार को आठवें महिला इंडियन ओपन टूर्नामेंट का खिताब जीत लिया। दिल्ली गोल्फ क्लब में चल रही तीन लाख डॉलर इनामी राशि वाली इस प्रतियोगिता को उन्होंने एक अंडर 72 का कॉर्ड खेलकर पांच स्ट्रोक के अंतर से जीता। नोसेरा ने पार 73 के इस टूर्नामेंट में कुल 11 अंडर 208 का स्कोर किया और इस जीत से उन्हें 45 हजार डॉलर की पुरस्कार राशि मिली। भारत की सबसे बड़ी उम्मीद वैष्णवी सिन्हा का तीसरे राउंड में काफी खराब प्रदर्शन रहा।

# Nocera in with a shout of European glory

**Kaushik Chatterji**

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On paper, it was a wire-to-wire victory; the margin, an impressive five strokes. But Nocera did not quite run away with the title. It was what resulted in an angry outburst on the par-four 15th hole, where a birdie opportunity quickly turned into a bogey.

The reaction was of someone who has set lofty standards for herself — Nocera went to study in the US on a golf scholarship and completed her education before becoming a professional golfer as late as 27, “because that’s what I wanted to do, not because it’s the only thing I could do”. International business degree in hand, golf became “a choice and not an obligation”. The choice was made in 2002, but the results took a while coming.

A dozen years later, she has a second shot at glory. Some might say it’s luck — earlier this week, the Ladies European Tour (LET) mandated that a player complete six events in order to be on the money list. Nocera went from fourth to second, breathing down Charley Hull’s neck. But it’s not really luck if, to get to within 23,000 euros of the top prize, you have to win a national Open on a tough course. In certain ways, the win mirrored Liang Wen-Chong’s at the 2008 Indian Open, incidentally in the same year as Nocera won the LET Order of Merit. Both opened with a course record and did the bare minimum over the rest of the days — Liang followed up a 12-under 60 with four-under over the next three days; Nocera’s nine-under 64 was followed by two cards of one-under apiece. But as far as the paycheque is concerned, there isn’t much similarity — while the Chinese pocketed \$158,500, Nocera, six years later, has earned \$45,000.

The disparity is something that the 39-year-old feels strongly about. “It’s hard to believe there’s such a difference,” Nocera lamented, wondering aloud why people are not ready to invest more in women’s golf, after all, “we are doing the same job.”

# Nocera in with a shout of European glory after India win

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Will things change for the better? Nocera has her doubts, but isn’t all pessimistic. “Hopefully at least in the Majors.”

**FINAL SCORES:** 208 Nocera, 213 Hyeon Seo Kang, Hannah Burke, Fabienne In-albon, 214 Vaishavi Sinha



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# Frenchwoman Nocera wins title

## HTC and Agencies

■ [sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com](mailto:sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com)

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# Nocera leads, Indians in pursuit

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**NEW DELHI:** Back when it was first co-sanctioned by the Ladies European Tour (LET) only three Indians made the cut at the Women's Indian Open, two of whom were amateurs. Cut to four years later, and one of those two amateurs, now in her rookie year as a professional, is vying with a former LET Order of Merit winner for the top honours.

In its eighth year now, the women's national Open is yet to see an Indian golfer lift the trophy. Scratch the surface, though, and there's plenty of promise — the number of Indians who have made the cut has increased progressively since the tournament's inclusion in LET's schedule in 2010. That 10 Indians will play on Saturday, nine of them for money, becomes more impressive when one takes



■ **Gwladys Nocera**

into account the tough conditions at the Delhi Golf Club on Friday.

After an opening round that saw low scores across the board — including a course record nine-under-par 63 by Gwladys Nocera — the second day was a reality check. Nocera is still out in front, but the lead is down to two strokes. While one of the reasons for a sedate sophomore of one-under 72 was that her “putts didn't drop”, she also pointed out that the pin positions were much

tougher on Friday.

Sharmila Nicollet concurred with the Frenchwoman. The only Indian to have made the cut in all five editions of the Open as an LET-sanctioned event, Nicollet felt that the conditions were far easier on Thursday. But she was up for the challenge, reaching the green in two strokes on the par-five eighth hole before sinking the eagle putt from about four feet. However, a poor tee shot in fading light on the final hole — “the only drive I've missed over the last two days” — left her six off the pace in tied fourth. Still the Indian best placed to win it, then, is Vaishavi Sinha. The best amateur in 2010, Sinha, who shot a two-under 71 on Friday, blamed her poor start on the early morning chill. On Saturday, the lead pack of Nocera, Sinha and holder Thidapa Suwannapura tee off at quarter to 10. Should be toasty enough by then.

# Nocera holds nerve to clinch Indian Open

By **Shaghil Bilali** in New Delhi

**OVERNIGHT** leader Gwladys Nocera of France shattered Vaishavi Sinha's dream of becoming the first Indian winner of the Hero Indian Open as the Frenchwoman held her nerve in crucial moments to clinch the title by three strokes at the Delhi Golf Club on Saturday.

Nocera's course record of nine-under 64 on the first day worked wonders for her and, despite two successive rounds of one-under 72, she eased to her second Ladies European Tour (LET) title in India and 13th overall.

South Korean Hyeon Seo Kang and Swiss Fabienne In-Albon came up with

the day's joint best round of four-under 69 each and England's Hannah Burke shot her third consecutive 71 to finish joint second, at six-under 213 total at the par-73 course.

Overnight second Vaishavi succumbed to pressure on the last day, and her three-over 76 forced her to slip to fifth place, six strokes behind the winner. Local pro Gauri Monga too squeezed into the top-10 as she finished eighth after a third-round 71. Promising amateur Aditi Ashok shot a 70 while Gursimar Badhwal shot a poor 75 to finish 14th and 18th respectively. Star golfer Sharmila Nicollet faded on the

last day and finished 44th after a disastrous nine-over 82.

Nocera had a modest start and was one-over after the front nine with a birdie on the second hole and bogeys on the fifth and ninth, but she bounced back with back-to-back birdies on the 11th and 12th. A bogey on the 15th indicated that she was losing rhythm, but she seized the moment with a birdie on the 17th and raced to a wire-to-wire victory. "I wasn't nervous. It has been a good week, I was up and down but still managed a victory by a decent margin," said Nocera, who also won the 2007 Indian Masters in Bangalore.

**French-woman wins by three strokes. India's Vaishavi crumbles under pressure and finishes fifth after a 76**



*Gwladys Nocera with the Hero Indian Open golf trophy in New Delhi on Saturday.*

# Wire-to-wire finish for France's Nocera

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**WOMEN'S | INDIAN OPEN**



France's Gwladys Nocera poses with the winner's trophy in New Delhi on Saturday.

birthday girl Vaishavi Sinha — overnight second — failed to hold on to her nerve in the closing 18th hole. A double bogey on the par-5 hole ended her hopes of a double celebration.

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**Nocera wins Indian Open golf:** French golfer Gwladys Nocera carded a one-under 72 to win the \$300,000 Hero Women's Indian Open in New Delhi on Saturday. She pocketed a winner's cheque of \$45,000. India's Vaishavi Sinha, who was in sole second spot after two rounds, double-bogeyed on the 18th hole to slip to sole fifth place on the final leaderboard. She got a total of 214 (67, 71, 76). India's Gauri Monga finished tied eighth with a three-day total of 217. Aditi Ashok was the best amateur this year with a final round score of 3-under 70 and a total of 219 that helped her finish tied 13th.

**Final scores: 208:** Gwladys Norcera (Fra) 64-72-72. **213:** Kang Hyeon-seo (Kor) 72-72-69; In-Albon Fabienne (Swi) 71-73-69; Burke Hannah (Eng) 71-71-69. **214:** Vaishavi Sinha (Ind) 67-71-76.



## French woman Nocera wins Indian Open golf

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# Nocera wins

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## WOMEN'S GOLF

rounds, suffered a meltdown on the 18th hole in which she double bogeyed to finish in the fifth place. Nocera took home the winner's cheque of \$45,000.

The world No 2 started the day on a positive note when she birdied the second hole. But two bogeys on the fifth and ninth holes blemished her card on the front nine. Nocera picked her game on the back nine by notching up birdies on the 11th, 12th and 17th. PTI