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# MacLaren, Hillier in driver's seat

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**Gurugram:** Every golfer has a story, but this one delivers her own stories quite eloquently. "Golf is beautiful in its brutality. And that's worth watching," Meghan MacLaren writes in her blog. There was nothing brutal in how she conducted herself on the DLF G&CC course on Day 1 of the \$500,000 Hero Women's Indian Open, but it was beautiful how she tamed the beast of the back nine to share a one-stroke lead with Aussie Whitney Hillier.

The 25-year-old Englishwoman cannot escape the engine analogies and she

## GOLF

definitely revved it up before the turn as she finished with a 5-under 67. The 'Quarry Nine' was the morning vision as she started from the tenth hole. "Waking up at 4am is not a nice thing but the first hour you have an empty course in front of you and really pure greens so that was good."

The No. 6 on the Ladies European Tour Order of Merit scripted her first birdie on the par-3 12th, and more followed on the 14th, 16th and the dangerous 17th. And yes, it did turn brutal. Little did Meghan know after two more birdies on the first and second which took the score to six-under, that she was up for a fight on the front nine.



**LEADING:** Meghan MacLaren

Three-putt on the 4h; birdie on the fifth; another three-putt on the 6th; another birdie on the 7th; missed green on the ninth.

### JYOTSANA'S HOLE-IN-ONE

If Meghan loves plots and stories, she will like this one about Jyotsana Singh's fortunate hole-in-one. She tied-28th, holed out on the par-3 16th from 140 yards and had this explanation later: "My 7-iron slipped from my grasp," she said, laughing. "I will make sure it happens again tomorrow." The top Indian was amateur Pranavi Urs who finished with a 71 to be tied-10th. Diksha Dagar, Tvesa Malik and Amandeep Drall were tied-18th on par.

**First round scores:** 67 (5-under)-Meghan MacLaren (Eng), Whitney Hillier (Aus); 68-Marianne Skarpnord (Nor), Liz Young (Eng); 69-Linda Wessberg (Swe); Selected: 70-Catriona Matthew, 77-Becky Morgan. Top Indians: 71-Pranavi Urs (am); 72-Amandeep Drall, Diksha Dagar, Tvesa Malik; 73-Gaurika Bishnoi, Neha Tripathi, Jyotsana Singh, Astha Madan.