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# MacLaren, Hillier in box seat; Pranavi best Indian

Ladies European Tour

Moushumi.Bora@timesgroup.com

**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 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."

And yes, it did turn brutal. As the mercury rose, "it got really bad, burning hot, it just kept getting stickier and stickier out there."

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. Three-putt on the 4<sup>th</sup>; birdie on the fifth; another three-putt on the 6<sup>th</sup>; another birdie on the 7<sup>th</sup>; missed green on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Every day on the course is a journey, and a chance to express. "I was getting edgy, butterflies in the stomach, but I've missed that feeling. When you're in that situation, it's where you want to be."

Meghan, you hear, considered applying for Oxford or Cambridge but the game was more enticing. While such a degree could have sent her on a different path, the Northants native uses the web world to combine her passion for sport and love for writing. "Sport waits



Meghan MacLaren in action on Thursday

for no one... but Stokes," was her take on Big Ben's Ashes tale.

## Jyotsana's hole-in-one

If Meghan loves plots and stories, she will like this one about Jyotsana Singh's 'fortunate' hole-in-one. The Indian tour rookie from Lucknow, tied-28<sup>th</sup>, holed out on the par-3 16<sup>th</sup> 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-10<sup>th</sup>. Diksha Dagar, Tvesa Malik and Amandeep Drall were tied-18<sup>th</sup> 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.