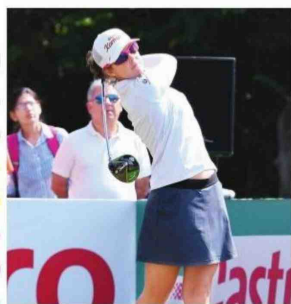


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Christine Wolf in action at the ongoing India Open in Gurugram on Saturday.

WOLF TAKES THE LEAD, ANIKA BEST INDIAN

By **V Krishnaswamy** in Gurugram

CHRISTINE Wolf has always loved coming to India. But this latest visit, her sixth successive one for the Hero Women's Indian Open, was something she had even greater reason to look forward to. She wanted to get back to one specific hole, the 18th, which had caused her much anguish, strokes and a title.

The Austrian took the first step with a birdie on the 18th, her first-ever at the hole since 2015. She carded 67 and to reach 8-under and lead by one over Meghan MacLaren (69). Further behind at 7-under 209 was Marianne Skarpnord (71).

Wolf is just one round away from her maiden Ladies European Tour title but needs to negotiate the 18th hole once

more and forever bury the demons that have been haunting her since last year.

For India, amateur Anika Varma, just 15, gave the fans a lot to cheer with a stunning

The Austrian strikes a birdie on 18th, her first since 2015

67 including six birdies, five on the front nine and one bogey on 17th. She was Tied-ninth as was Tvesa Malik, who followed her 72-72 with a 71 to get to one-under 215. Vani Kapoor shot 72 and was Tied-13th.

Anika said, "Six birdies, I feel all of them were really good, but on the eighth I sank a really long 20-foot putt for birdie. I kept hitting it very good, so didn't need very long putts."

Last year the 18th was a nightmare for Wolf with DB-Par-Quadruple-DB (7-5-9-7). That single Par-5 hole cost her eight shots and she ended two shots behind winner Becky Morgan.

Wolf admitted she had a point to prove and said, "I love coming to India anyway. The people are super friendly and the course is amazing."

She knows it is still not over, "There are still 18 holes to play and a lot of holes to go so in golf you can never say I deserve it."

This Sunday she can finally end that nightmare.