

AN INTENSE BATTLE ON THE CARDS

Strongest Ever Field Assembles For 3rd Edition Of Gujarat Kensville Challenge

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Ahmedabad: An array of champions from European, Asian and PGTI Tours has arrived in Ahmedabad for the third edition of the Gujarat Kensville Challenge making it by far the strongest the event has seen so far. The event, which has now become the regular season-opener for both the Indian PGTI and the European Challenge Tours, will for the first time feature a Major champion, Rich Beem, who won the 2002 PGA Championship, ahead of Tiger Woods. The competitive field also includes former European Tour winners — Rhys Davies, Raymond Russell, Jose-Phillipe Lima and Daniel Vansick. There are also several Asian Tour winners, like the 2011 Kensville winner Gaganjeet Bhullar (4 wins), Shiv Kapur, Rahul Gangjee, Himmat Rai and old warhorse Gaurav Ghei (3 wins).

This year both Bhullar and Gangjee exude tremendous confidence on eve of the tournament.

"I am confident and chances are definitely high but in golf you never know," said Bhullar and added: "You have many European Tour winners here this week, so it will be different and a lot will depend on how you play in those four days. I had a very good round today (nine birdies) and I am sure I should be able to take the same form forward into the main tournament."

Gangjee said: "Yesterday and today, I played pretty good. Today I shot four-under. I had a long holiday, but last week was good preparation. The course is playing much better than it did last year; more lush green and I hope to repeat last year's show."

Scott Barr is a surprise entrant, hav-



Gaganjeet Bhullar

ing last played in the Challenge Tour back in 2008. The other player, who makes his maiden appearance in Kensville is Terry Pilkadaris, a former three-time winner on Asian Tour. Two other youngsters who could make an impact on international golf in the near future and return to Kensville after making their debut here last year are An Byeong-hun and Peter Uihlein, the 2009 and 2010 US Amateur champions.

Adding to the excitement is a bunch of young Indians, who are turning pro with this event, led by two-time Indian amateur champion Seenappa Chikkrangappa, Angad Cheema, the reigning Indian amateur champion, 16-year-old Shubhankar Sharma, Khalin Joshi and Honey Baisoya.

Another player hoping the event will do the same for him is Shiv Kapur. He said, "The second half of 2012 was fine with a string of top-10s and I ended the year with my first win in a long time against a very strong field at home."

Pics: Yogesh Chawda

City trio wins Pro-Am event, Bhullar's praise

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Ahmedabad: It was a memorable outing for three youngsters from Ahmedabad — Varun Parikh, Anshul Patel and Kairav Shah — at the Pro-Am event of the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2013. They won the Pro-Am event with a combined score of 53 (minus 19) over a strong and experienced field. But more than the awards, the three youngsters will return home richer with the invaluable experience they got by spending time with Gaganjeet Bhullar, one of the best pro golfers in the country.

Even Bhullar was all praise for the trio. "I heard before tee off that they are some of the best juniors from Gujarat and it was a pleasure playing with them because they all are really good," he said.

Bhullar said: "Anshul is left-handed and I have never seen a better left-handed swing in my life. He has got the perfect mechanics and he was in the Hank Haney Academy in the US (one of the finest golf schools in the world)."

About Varun, Bhullar said that "he has a very good temperament and a good overall game."

"There are so many golf courses in Gujarat, hopefully we will see some good golfers coming out of Gujarat. And these three kids might start the golf

revolution Gujarat badly needs," said Bhullar.

The youngsters were so thrilled to play with the champion golfer that they couldn't stop praising how good Bhullar was. "I hardly remember seeing an India pro hitting the ball with such perfection and accuracy. It was the fairway and the green and the putts were right on the middle of the cup, no edges," said Anshul.

"You really learn a lot by seeing such a champion from so close. The way he concentrates before his shots and the way he executes them. And he does that not once or twice but consistently, which shows his class," said Varun and declared: "There is no stopping Bhullar from winning this one."

Whether Bhullar wins the tourney or not, only time will tell but there is no doubt that he was won these kids over.



Parimal Nathwani, group president, Corporate Affairs, Reliance Industries Ltd, gives away prize to one of the winners