

MCARTHUR TAKES SOLE LEAD

Kapur Second; Bhullar, Gangjee Make Up For Day One's Blemish

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Ahmedabad: The focus was off golf for a while as Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar made a rare appearance on the course to witness the ongoing Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2013 at Kensville Golf and Country Club here on Friday. Even golfing conditions were much tougher during the second day's play with a stronger wind and tougher pin positions. But the golfers were soon at it. And a bogey-free round peppered with three birdies vaulted overnight tied second place finisher Andrew McArthur to the top of the leaderboard with eight under 136.

The 32-year-old Scotsman, with one Challenge Tour win dating back to 2008 against his name, didn't score too many birdies but didn't miss any either as he shot three under 69 for the day with birdies in the first, seventh and 17th hole.

Shiv Kapur maintained his place behind the leader with six under 138. But Kapur had a pretty indifferent round with three birdies and two bogeys and finished today's round with one under 71. Overnight leader Agustin Domingo slipped two places with one over 73 for the day. With just two birdies against three bogeys in round two, the Spaniard was tied third with a score of five under 139. Dutchman Tim Sluiter, who climbed nine places finished was also tied third with a day's score of three under 69. Scot Booth Wallace, who climbed one place, was the other one in tied third place with one under 71.



Andrew McArthur (L) took sole lead with eight under 136; Mother-child duo having a day out at Kensville Golf and Country Club



Last year's runner-up Rahil Gangjee (72-69) and 2011 Kensville champion Gaganjeet Bhullar (71-70) were tied sixth at three-under 141 as 19 Indians made the cut which fell at three-over. Young guns S Chikkarangappa (74-73) and Shubhankar Sharma (75-72) who were making their pro debut this week were among those making the cut, alongside veterans Mukesh Kumar (73-71) and Ali Sher (73-73).

McArthur later said, "I hit it better today. I hit it closer and more often and didn't hole as many putts though I still holed a couple of nice ones. It was really solid. I hit two bad

shots all day at the 14th and 15th tees and managed to get away with pars (on them). I had chances but you can't expect to hole them all."

Kapur who had an early morning start was leading at the halfway stage last but as the day wore on McArthur overtook him by two shots. Still keeping his smile intact after a hard day's work, the 30-year-old Kapur said: "I had a chance to pull away from the field but I'm still right there. I did not really have my A game today. I didn't play as well as I did on the first day. It was a bit scrappy and didn't hit it as close and made some soft bogeys. It (the

round) was blemish free until the 17th and I was playing steady but nothing flashy. It was one of those days where I had to make the best of what I had."

Gangjee, who played with Kapur, said, "I hit the ball and putted much better than the first day and that was the difference between the two rounds. I am just trying to focus on the positives and it helps like the big putt on the seventh. I had a great 30-35 footer on the seventh, just like yesterday for a birdie. The greens are very firm and will likely become firmer over the weekend."

Pics: TOI

Sachin at home in golf course

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Ahmedabad: Sachin Tendulkar definitely has a career in golf after cricket. The Master Blaster, who was at the Kensville Golf and Country Club Course on Friday, spent close to 30 minutes at the driving range, hitting some 50 balls and each time finding the sweetspot of the driver. It took everybody by surprise, including some pros who were taking part in the ongoing Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2013. Tendulkar started hitting every ball high and hard beyond the 200 metre mark. And that too when the pin was not properly placed. When someone put the pin in order, and another corrected his stance and taught him the right way to grip the driver, Tendulkar went past the 275m mark.

"I like hitting the ball, whether it is a cricket ball or a golf ball," he said later. "I have not played golf that much, but I have tried it during holidays and found it a fantastic feeling. The sound that you hear when you connect gives you a different kind of satisfaction."

When asked if he would take up golf seriously some time, Tendulkar said, "This morning was a lot of fun, I hit a lot of balls and it was nice. I enjoy racket sports and have not been able to play golf. My focus has been cricket. Maybe golf will come some time in the future."

Tendulkar arrived at the course in the morning and stayed till late afternoon. He attended the ground-breaking ceremony of his proposed villa at the golf course. It was a private affair with only the Master Blaster, the three promoters of Kensville — Jaxay Shah, Jigish Shah and Sameer Sinha — and Tendulkar's close friend Rahul Sanghvi being present at the ceremony. It has been learnt that Tendulkar also performed a small puja, chanting mantras



Yogesh Chawda

Sachin Tendulkar (left) enjoys a light moment as he watches other golfers

with the pandit. Tendulkar later took part in a putting challenge, his teammates being Shiv Kapur and Gaganjeet Bhullar. They were up against a team which included Rich Beem, Rahil Gangjee and Rhys Davies. The competition was for a cheque of Rs 1 lakh which was later donated to the Tendulkar Charitable Trust.