



Domingo leads, Shiv, McArthur tied in second

Spaniard not only manages a one-shot lead, but also sets course record on day one of GKC

DNA Correspondent • AHMEDABAD

Football's ultimate clash, the Clasico, kept him awake into the wee hours of Thursday morning. The avid Barcelona fan went to bed after his favourite team drew 1-1 with Real Madrid in the first leg semi-final of the Kings Cup back in Spain.

However, the late night thriller did little to affect Spaniard golfer Agustin Domingo's game in the first round of the Gujarat Kenville Challenge (GKC) 2013 on Thursday. With a score of six-under, the Domingo not only managed a one-shot lead over India's Shiv Kapur and Scotsman Andrew McArthur, but also set a new course record.

Domingo did miss a few putts, barring which his scorecard would have read even better. "I started well, but did not make many birdie putts. I chipped in from 20 metres at the second hole for a birdie and then missed a short putt at the fifth. I missed a short putt at the fourth and missed a drive at the seventh and had to drop it and made a bogey. Then I birdied the 10th, 12th and 13th and finished with birdies at the 17th and 18th. The last two were really good putts, five metres and seven metres," said Domingo, who had four top-10 finishes on the Challenge Tour last season.

Meanwhile, Indian hope Kapur had a flawless five-under 67 in the evening. He wasn't happy with his putting, but was pleased that he did not drop any shots. "I should have gone further up, had I not missed some putts today. I struggled with my putting and the longest was six feet on the 17th. But I compensated it with some good driving and that made my day," said Kapur, who landed in Ahmedabad with a title at Shubhkamna Champions Golf in December.

Kapur landed his first birdie on par-five at sixth hole from five feet, but then had to wait till the 10th for his next one, where he tapped another birdie. He hit



"I'm really happy that I set a course record. I had one as an amateur at a new course way back when I was young. So, this is the first time since then. I didn't expect to have such a good day!"—Agustin Domingo

the greenside bunker on 14th but did well to come up with a third birdie. He followed that with another on the 15th, and then went five-under with a six-footer on 17th.

Meanwhile, five birdies in the opening six holes gave Andrew McArthur a flying start. McArthur, who finished 45th in the Challenge Tour Rankings last year, was on fire, holing a thirty-footer at the 10th – his first – for a birdie.

Three other Indians, Amardip Singh Malik, Om Prakash Chouhan and Vishal Singh had two-under 70 each, for a tied 12th place, while 2011 champion Gaganjeet Bhullar along with Rashid Khan and Himmat Rai were at one-under 71 each, tied at 20th place. Last year's runner-up, Rahil Gangjee carded an even par-72. The drawcard of the tournament, 2002 USPGA champion Rich Beem, shot one-over 73.



Ali Baba and 35 years

Young golfers today

Ali Sher has been on the greens for the past 35 years and has been witness to all the changes that golf has undergone in India. The 51-year-old is on his third visit to Ahmedabad, for the Gujarat Kenville Challenge. The Arjuna Award winner gets candid during an interaction with Nikhilesh Pathak

They are amazing. The youngsters know the importance of keeping themselves fit for the game, which is why they lay emphasis on yoga and hitting the gym. If these youngsters are nurtured well, the sport will grow immensely.

Golf in India

The sport has changed a lot, over the 35 years that I have been playing. Earlier, they used to call it a retired man's game. However, now, that perception no longer exists. Wooden clubs have been replaced by metallic ones, equipment, balls – everything has changed. The biggest yield is that golf has been recognised as a sport now. Young boys are taking it up as profession. When we started playing, the total prize money used to be Rs1 lakh, with the winner taking home a cheque of Rs16,000. Now, just the winner gets a cheque of more than that. This is good for the game.

