

DOMINGO TAKES LEAD

Shiv Kapur, McArthur Close Behind

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Pics: Yogesh Chawda



Agustin Domingo of Spain made a new course record score of six-under 66 after the first round on Thursday

Ahmedabad: If you are Spanish, you ought to be a football fan, no matter whether you are a politician, a chess player or a golfer. So is Agustin Domingo, who was glued to the TV till late Wednesday night watching the El Clasico between Real Madrid and Barcelona, before teeing off post-noon at the Kensville Golf and Country Club Course on Thursday. But barring a bogey in the par-5 seventh hole, he had a pretty good round on front nine with birdies in the second and the ninth hole. He didn't stop at that and started back nine with a birdie in the 10th and had back-to-back birdies till the 14th after which he had two par scores and then finished it off with two more birdies to be in sole lead with a new course record score of six-under 66 after the first round of the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2013.

"I am a huge Barcelona fan and watched their match last

night. The match ended at 3.15 am and then I went to bed and slept till about 10.30 this morning. I didn't expect to have such a good day because I have been training for the past three weeks and I didn't feel too good going into this tournament but everything went well," said the Spaniard, who also had a new course record as a youngster.

GUJARAT KENSVILLE CHALLENGE 2013

Close on his heels are an Indian, Shiv Kapur, and a Scott Andrew McArthur, who missed the cut last year, with a score of five under 67. At tied

fourth place are Victor Riu, Wallace Booth and Jacob Glen-nemo with four-under 68. Last year's runner-up Rahil Gangjee played par and first-time winner Gaganjeet Bhullar, after a double bogey in the opening hole, finished with one under 71. Apart from the first hole, Bhullar played pretty safe and solid golf for the rest of the

round with birdies in the 10th, 14 and 17th hole to finish Day One on a fairly positive note. Gangjee started with back to back bogies but birdied the 7th, 8th and 9th for some respectability to his score. He started on the back nine with a bogey but had a birdie in the next to be followed with another bogey. He birdied the 14th but another bogey in the 17th marred his day, but still managed to finish at a par score.

Three other Indians, Amar-dip Sinh Malik, Om Prakas

Chouhan and Vishal Singh had two-under 70 each in tied 12th place. The draw card of the tournament, Rich Beem, the 2002 PGA Champion, shot one-over 73.

Kapur is one of the more familiar faces here and he obliges anyone who approaches him for a photograph or an autograph with a pleasant smile. He said: "It was a good solid bogey-free golf. On the front nine I left a lot of putt but played the ball pretty solid all day, gave myself a lot of chances and the longest putt I had all day was 6 ft so I struck it really well. I won't say I struggled with the putter. I rolled the ball well but I didn't hole as many as I should have but with five under after the first round, I have no complaints."

McArthur was surprised with his score and said: "I just got off to a flyer and before I knew it I was five under after six." He, however, said that it was a difficult course.

IT'S JUST GOLF

Ahmedabad: Andrew McArthur was wearing running trainers instead of golf shoes during the first day's action. When asked what's wrong, McArthur said: "I was travelling in flip-flops and while getting off the bus, I caught my heel on the step and it took a chunk of skin so I tried those heel supports but I couldn't even get my golf shoes on. Because the golf shoes are so rigid, it was very painful, so I have trainers on. I'm hoping I can get a pair of golf shoes on by the end of the week. I had a shot out of a bunker today and I nearly fell over!" But despite that, McArthur was in jolly good mood all through and was also seen giggling to glory at the breakfast table.

Learning course: It was a pleasing sight to see one of Gujarat's most promising golfers Varun Parikh in the thick of things during the first day's action here, albeit in a different role. Varun turned caddy to the reigning Indian amateur champion 16-year-old



Varun (L) with Shubhankar

Shubhankar Sharma who is playing here in one of the sponsors' slot. "That way I will get to know what goes through a pro's mind during the course of a competition, what he thinks and how he tackles every situations," said Varun.