

Jeev eyes top-50 spot to get a Masters ticket

HE HAS crossed 40, and an injury in right index finger have kept him out of action on and off, but Jeev Milkha Singh feels if he remains fit he will be in the top-50 to ensure a direct entry into the Augusta Masters, starting April 11.

The World NO.96 will start his European Tour campaign for the year with the Volvo Golf Champions in Durban this week, despite the doctor advising him to sit out as the injury can flare up. But Jeev said if he listens to the advice his target of getting into top 50 will fall short and he won't be able to make it to Masters.

"I am leaving for Durban (Monday) and then will turn up in three tournaments in middle east (Abu Dhabi, Doha and Dubai). It will be followed by a month's rest and then one more tournament. So

By **Shaghil Bilali** in New Delhi

practically I have five events to play before the Masters. I believe if the injury doesn't flare up again, I can make it to top-50 that will give me a direct entry into Masters," Jeev said at the launch of the Challenge Tour season-opener Gujarat Kensville tournament, starting in Ahmedabad on January 31.

A jump of 46 rungs isn't an easy affair, especially when one is inside top 100, but given Jeev's record on the Asian courses at the European Tour events, the feat doesn't look unachievable. He witnessed a giant leap

Jeev Milkha Singh
QAMAR SIBTAIN

last year, jumping from 192 to 87 after a victory at the Scottish Open which also had the likes of Rory McIlroy in the fray.

SACHIN TO SPICE UP EVENT

Kensville golf, the only tournament of the Challenge Tour in India, will have a cricketing flavour as Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar will flag-off the program event on January 30. "Sachin (Tendulkar) will do the celebrity tee-off of the Pro-Am, though he won't play. We feel if an icon like Sachin associates himself with golf it will help a lot of youngsters to take up the game as a career," said Sameer Sinha, managing director of Kensville Golf and Country Club.

Sachin's presence will spice up the event, but the field will include the 2002 PGA Championship winner Rich Beem of USA as the biggest golfing star attraction. The likes of Ganganjeet Bhullar, 2010 winner in the event, last-year runner-up Rahil Gangjee, Himmat Rai and 57 domestic pro tour golfers will form the strong Indian field.

Kensville Challenge, in its third year will have a field of 121 golfers including 57 Indians.

Jeev, despite being the brand ambassador and designer of the Kensville golf course, will give the event a miss as he will play in Dubai the same week.

The Challenge Tour is the qualifying platform for the European Tour where the top 25 players on the order of merit list get a chance to play on the main Tour.

