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Jeev's gone but his shadow remains in Kensville

While Jeev went on to become a top golfer, his friend Gurvinder Singh had to leave studies; he makes a living as golfer's caddie

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Classmates at DAV college in Chandigarh, both Jeev Milkha Singh and Gurvinder Singh made a career in golf. While Jeev went on to become India's most celebrated golfer, his classmate Gurvinder made a living as Jeev's caddie.

Jeev was fortunate enough to complete his education and obtained a degree in business and international studies, Gurvinder was not so lucky.

Due to family constraints, Gurvinder had to drop out of college after first year and turned to agriculture to support his family. But living near the Chandigarh Golf Club, Gurvinder couldn't turn a blind eye towards golf.

He started to work at the Chandigarh Golf club and when Jeev turned professional, Gurvinder became his caddie.

For more than 12 years, Gurvinder has been following his old classmate like a shadow and is Jeev's great source of strength. So Jeev's caddie was pretty disappointed when his master decided to pull out of Kensville Gujarat Challenge 2011. "He was very keen to play here. He played the pro-am but after that the back pain resurfaced and Jeev had to withdraw. It was unfortunate that Jeev couldn't play in the biggest tournament held at his signatory golf course," said Gurvinder, with disappointment written large over his face.

With the master gone, Gurvinder is now going around Kensville as caddie of another Chandigarh golfer, Sujjan Singh



PIC: KALPESH BHATT

Jeev with Gurvinder at Kensville course during the pro-am event

Gurvinder believes a caddie's job is much more than holding a golfer's baggage. "A caddie is a golfer's guide on the course. Looking at the fairway and greens, an experienced caddie can predict how a golf course will behave."

"Besides, a caddie should act as a guide to the golfer. You should understand his body language and motivate your master when he is down," he said.

Gurvinder also adds that a caddie's earnings too has increased in the years gone by and he is able to make a decent living out of his profession. "When I started out, the monetary ben-

efits were not that great. Now we get at least 10 per cent of what the master earns if he wins the title in a tournament. If he finishes in top ten, then he gets 7 per cent and if he finishes below ten then the caddie gets 5 per cent."

Asked about his memorable moment in the golf course, Gurvinder was quick to respond: "Every time when Jeev wins, I am thrilled. I cannot pick one moment as such."

Gurvinder now dreams of making his eight-year old son a top golfer. "I have named him Janish Jeev Singh. He has started to play golf. I am his coach."