

Indian juniors can test the best

Tee time



GAGANJEET BHULLAR

The third edition of the Albatross International Junior Golf Championship will, for the first time, carry R&A World Amateur Golf Ranking points, giving the young participants a bigger incentive. This year, it has been co-sanctioned by Hank Haney's International Junior Golf Academy (USA).

The Indian junior golfers earlier had no such opportunity to be counted as one on the world amateur ranking system. In our junior days, we only used to think about the ranking on the domestic junior circuit.

GREAT GOING

Coming to the field, South Africa, the 2010 champions, return to defend their title, and it will take a lot to knock them off their perch. The likes of Sarit Benyapa and Puwit, who have wins in the Jakarta World Juniors, are top players from Thailand and for the first time, players from China will also be strong contenders.

Also amongst those teeing off at the Classic Golf Resort in Gurgaon are two Japanese girls, Ayaka Nakayama and Moyu Sasaki, ranked first and second, respectively, on Hank Haney's International Junior Golf Tour in the US. Wu Sha of China too is to be watched.

The Indian challenge will be led by Subhankar Sharma, Manu, Abhishek (age 15-17yrs) along with the trio of Piyush, Prakhar and Feroz Grewal (age 13-14 yrs). Among the girls, there is Nikita Arjun (age 15-17yrs), Seher Atwal and Ankita Kedlya (age 13-14 yrs). There are other young Indians who are capable of mounting a challenge for the top honours.

Besides hosts India, promising juniors from China, Thailand, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, USA, Sweden, Japan, Korea, Canada and South Africa have entered the event. It is heartening to see more and more overseas players participating. The event has the potential of becoming a permanent fixture on the world junior calendar as there is no other regular junior international event in India.

The Swarovski crystal studded trophy is a beautiful piece of art and goes to the team and individual winners across all categories.

I wish the juniors the best for the championship.

(GAGANJEET BHULLAR IS ONE OF INDIA'S TOP PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS)

