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LADIES EUROPEAN TOUR QUALIFIERS

Indians off to good start

AGE CORRESPONDENT

✓ The Indian trio of Smriti Mebra, Rhea Nair and Sharmila Nicollet opened their 2012 Ladies European Tour Golf pre-qualifying school campaign on a good note.

The seasoned Smriti fired a two-over 75 to share 22nd place with Dubai-based Rhea Nair (76) on the par-73 South Course at the La Manga Golf Resort in La Manga, Spain.

They were six behind the leaders.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru lass Sharmila, the only Indian playing her first round on the par-71 North Course, carded a three-over 74 to be placed tied 28th and was seven shots behind the leader.

Among other Indians in Group B at the South course, Neha Tripathi (81) and Nalini Singh Siwach (82) had a tough time.

The European Tour pre-qualifiers have been split into Groups A and B, with the top 35 and ties in both groups going through to the 90-hole final stage, where they will be a cut for leading 50 and ties after 72 holes.

After the final round, the top 30 players will be eligible for membership to the main LET Tour.

All players play at both the North and South courses.

Smriti, a former LPGA player, dropped a shot on the first hole before getting a steady streak of pars. She then birdied the eighth, but a bogey on the ninth and a double bogey on the 11th set her back.

Another bogey on the 13th saw her ending her round at two-over.

On the other hand, Rhea had four birdies against four bogeys and a double bogey on par 5 (21).

Playing at the North course, Sharmila bogeyed the first, but birdied the second.

She then had eight pars, before back-to-back bogeys spoiled her card. Sharmila birdied the 14th, but bogeys on 14th and 16th held her back at 74.

The leader on the South course were Christe de Vries of the Netherlands and England's Annal Scott who brought in opening rounds of four under par (69).

Leader on the North course was Valentine Derrey of France, who shot four-under 67.

A total of 211 players from 44 countries have had entered the LET qualifying school.

The Final Qualifying would be played from January 15 to 18.



Rhea Nair