Diksha eyes one final stand

Looks To Finish Well At DLF G&CC As Injury Cuts Short Her Season

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AIMING FOR THE RIGHT SWING: Diksha Dagar

Gurugram: Diksha Dagar was quietly watching her heroes swinging in the rain at the DGC driving range last week. Her favourite Justin Rose was at it, as well as Tommy Fleetwood and Shane Lowry. What caught her eye was smooth operator Rory McIlroy, whom she had met at the Paris Olympics on the putting greens of Le Golf National. She was amazed. "Rory has got a soft finish. On TV, he looks aggressive. He swings hard, but it's not like that in reality. His swing is so smooth, yet so powerful," Diksha said, her eyes lit up as she relived the moment.

Almost a fortnight earlier, she was also in the spotlight, on the Asian Games podium, with a team silver medal around her neck. Individually, she felt she could have done better.

Little did others know she had been struggling with a knee injury for almost five months. This persistent problem will ensure that the $500,000 Hero Women's Indian Open will be the final episode of her current season. "I was not able to swing to my potential, with the weight transfer and twisting body position. I didn't want to give up because it was my dream. I had this belief that I would recover after the first round. Sometimes prayers can be powerful."

The mind too, as she tries to get into the 'blinkers' mode at DLF. The daily grind doesn't seem to bother her, despite the painful reminders.

"Golf is an addiction. Even if your day is not going well, there is hope that if you give it a go, it can change quickly. So, the motivation is always there. I wonder what I would be doing if I didn't play this game."

The two-time winner on the LET knows the Majors and the Olympics are never a step too far. "When I was playing in Paris, I realised it is not tough to win if you don't look at the other players. At the Women's Open, the top athletes were there. First day, I played two-under, and I was tied-eighth. The winning score was five-under. If I had continued in the same vein, I could have been easily in the top-10."

At its core, it can be a simple game. "Just play to your strengths, and I'm very good at the short game."

But it can be complicated too. "I thrive in windy conditions, and on the second day there was no wind, Made a 74, missed the cut. In the Scottish Open where I finished top-20, the wind was very strong so it was different."

Her dreams packed for next year's journey, there is no wind to chase on the intimidating grounds that Gary Player created. The No. 18 on the LET Order of Merit, who missed cuts in her last three Tour events, headed straight to the putting greens. No trip to the range, she's skipping the hard yards till Thursday's opening round.

Diksha desperately needs a break, a lucky one will do too.