Good friends Pranavi and Shannon share spotlight again

Tan Tied-2nd While Home Hope Tied-5th With Avani; Chiara Leads The Way

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Gurugram: It was friendship day on the greens as Shannon Tan and Pranavi Urs walked out in the morning with former winner Camille Chevalier, but the golf buddies soon moved into their private headspace at the demanding DLF Golf & Country Club course. For India's Asian Games gold medallist, who returned home to a rousing welcome, there was a little trouble in her 'belly-space' during the first round of the $500,000 Hero Women's Indian Open.

WOMEN'S INDIAN OPEN

"Don't think I'm a true Indian anymore because I can't handle spice," Pranavi, from Mysuru, later shared a glimpse of her dry wit. Despite struggling with her ball-striking, she refuelled with electrolytes to post a two-under round. "Being under the weather is not good here considering how challenging it is. So I just had to keep it all together."

While Shannon is at four-under, in tied-second place, Pranavi shared tied-fifth place with Avani Prashanth. Both LET members were there, spraying champagne on Shannon, when the Singaporean won her first title in Kenya two years ago. "They didn't know I was allergic to it," Tan said about the moment on the magical Baobab course, where giraffes stride majestically on the 18th.

In India, it's mostly 'spot the peacock' but ibises were watching keenly when the friends stepped off with matching pars on the 18th. It's a bond that has been growing for more than a decade, through the amateur days, competitive pro life, and the breakthroughs. "At the Asian Games, she wanted me to win, if not her, and I was there for her first win."

LET



HEADING THE LIST: Chiara Tamburlini

Avani's injury battle

It has been a struggle for Avani, 20, as she negotiates her second full season in Europe. "I had a disc bulge in my L3, L4 and L5, and I decided to go and play nine weeks of golf straight," the Bengaluru pro said.

Playing through the pain for nearly three months, she found herself sinking to 115th in the Merit list. At 57 now, she could afford to breathe easy, and her approach game took her to two-under and the front rows at DLF.

Chiara on top

Above them all, at five-under, stands contented Swiss miss Chiara Tamburlini. The former Europe No. 1, an LPGA rookie, is delighted to be back. "I don't think I've stopped smiling because everybody's so friendly and lovely," said the 26-year-old, who has struggled with the cold competitive atmosphere in America. Just chatting and enjoying dinner time with the girls has freed her soul, and her game.

Round 1: -5 Chiara Tamburlini (Swi); -4 Shannon Tan (Sin), Magdalena Simmermacher (Arg), Sara Kouskova (Cze); -2 Pranavi Urs, Avani Prashanth, Lois Lau (Fra), Dorthea Forbrigd (Nor); **Select scores:** -1 (T9) Tvesa Malik, +5 (T62) Diksha Dagar.