Vani hopes to keep emotions in check

Local Hope Takes One-Stroke Lead

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Gurugram: Hands on hips, Vani Kapoor was ready for the interviews with her wide smile. But there was rage in her eyes as she reflected on the final-hole bogey.

Even if she was trying hard to be oblivious of her position as leading lady going into the final day at 5-under, she could not entirely escape the pressure that comes with the hope of ending a decade-long home title drought at the Hero Women's Indian Open. Familiar with the treacherous trails at the DLF Golf and Country Club course that could soon see your dreams catch a downslope, the local pro is yearning to stay in the present.

WOMEN'S INDIAN OPEN

"I tend to be an overthinker," the 32-year-old said after her round of 69, adding that she was relying on her father's wise words. "He has been telling me, this Indian Open, you are in a good space. Just back yourself up. This is probably my 14th or 15th HWIO as a pro and a couple more as an amateur and I think this is the most fun I've ever had."

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EYES ON THE FINISH LINE: Vani hopes to end a decade-long wait for a home win

There have been many lessons learnt, most notably when she was opening-day leader a year before. For now, she was only looking back to the previous day, when an eagle on the 14th and a following birdie created the momentum for Saturday. "The best thing was I didn't get too excited. I don't want my emotions to get the better of me."

The bogey she was chiding herself for was her second in the last four holes: "I wasn't backing myself 100%." Chased by defending champion Shannon Tan and three-time winner Pornanong Phatlum, Vani knows she can't afford many mistakes. Struggling with a wrist flare-up on Friday, the Singaporean lost seven strokes from hole 1 to 7 but rebooted on Saturday with five birdies on the same holes. Phatlum, meanwhile, recharged herself overnight with "real Thai food" at the nearby outlet Nara Thai. Vani be warned, she is ordering from the same restaurant Saturday night.

Meanwhile, unwell Pranavi hung on despite her "body giving up on the back-nine" while overnight leader Chiara Tamburlini tumbled with a 7-over 79.

Round 3 leaderboard: -5 Vani Kapoor (IND) 73-69-69; -4 Shannon Tan (SIN) 68-77-67; -4 Pornanong Phatlum (THA) 72-71-69; -3 Pranavi Urs (IND) 70-70-73, Magdalena Simmermacher (ARG) 68-72-73; Select score: -1 (8th) Tvesa Malik 71-73-71.