



Tuesday Preview

Anirban Lahiri (Ind)

Thoughts coming back?

It is like coming back home for me. I won a couple of years ago in Kuala Lumpur. Obviously I've played in two EurAsia Cups and so many years on the Asian Tour so it is always a warm welcome for me. I played at Saujana as an amateur many years ago so it is like de-ja-vu for me again. It has been a while but it is nice to be back.

What do you remember about Saujana?

I barely remember much but the layout is pretty much the same. I remember the second hole used to have three or four tiers but it has two tiers now. There are a few things that stand out but it is all sketchy.

How's the game feeling?

I got off to a good start end of last year in Malaysia. It has not been as good as I liked it to be. I only played three events this year but I feel like my game is in the right place. I'm making a lot of birdies which is a good sign. I probably need to tighten my round a bit and put four good rounds together.

Any problems with jetlag?

This morning was a struggle for me having flown in yesterday. A couple of days here I will be fine. Somehow Malaysia brings out the best of me so hopefully come Thursday I can bring my best game on the golf course.

How much impact does your success have in golf in India?

I don't think I've done enough. I think my best golf is ahead of me and the biggest impact has yet to happen. Obviously the last few years I've seen some difference. Last year when I was at the Hero Indian Open, I saw a lot of kids, more than what I saw in previous years. Having said that, it is not only me. If you look at Aditi Ashok, she has taken the ladies golf world by storm. Between the two of us we are making the game a little bit more attractive for the younger generation. In terms of development, it will take years. You won't see results overnight but hopefully we do our bits and keep it moving in the right direction.

How important is it to you to come back to Asia?

Personally it is very important for me to come back to Asia for many different reasons. I want to stay in touch with my roots. This is where developed my golf and it is important to stay in touch. You will always see me coming back to Asia, to India for sure. It is like chicken soup for me – I meet my friends and play on courses where I grew up playing on. Mind you these are great events to be playing in. I'm not really making a big sacrifice. It is something that I really enjoy doing.

How important is the co-sanction events between the Asian Tour and European Tour?

I think we are already seeing the benefits. If you look at the number of Asian Tour players who have won in the co-sanction events in the last 36 months, it is a big number. They've managed to graduate to the next level of golf. It is like events like this that gives more players an opportunity. For me even making the cut in an event like this in the past was a good experience. This specific event has always played an important role for the Asian Tour Order of Merit race so this is a very, very important event.