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Make the cut

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'I MADE CUT'

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When Varun Parikh walked to the tournament office, to record his day's score, he announced the good news to this writer: "I made the cut. I made the cut."

Varun's tone and tenor might have ruffled a few feathers among the purists, but it reminded the writer of the free-spirit of a certain Shiv Shankar Prasad Chowrasia who caught nation's attention in 2008 when he won the inaugural Indian Masters, an European Tour event. But it was his straight-from-the-heart conversations that always left audience spellbound.

SIMILAR SPIRIT

In terms of spirit, Varun is almost similar to the senior pro, who is also playing in PGTI Ahmedabad Masters presented by Kalhaar Blues and Greens, but a bit louder. "Isn't he too loud?" wondered one of the onlookers.

But consider this: He is just 15. He is playing in his maiden professional tournament. And he made the cut!

The excitement is understandable and Varun knew about it. "It is my first PGTI tournament and I made the cut. I am overjoyed and crazily excited," the youngster told *Mirror*.

IN AUGUST COMPANY

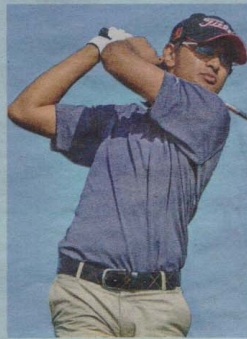
But plying his trade alongside the likes of India's highest ranked golfer and tournament leader Anirban Lahiri and S Chikkarangappa and Abhishek Jha, all of whom have had successful amateur careers before turning professionals, Varun knew he had to cut down the noise.

"I think it is one of the reason behind Anirban's success - he is so down to earth," Varun said of his senior pro, adding "It is something that I am trying to inculcate in my game too and there is so much to learn from them."

LESSONS LEARNT

"There were times when I used to get too excited and at times I used to get hyper at the caddie. But now I realised whatever I do, it is mine. The poor caddie is just earning his living," Varun recalled his earlier days.

It was a topsy-turvy day for the teenager who started at 10th and hit bogeys in the 11th, 13th and 15th before sinking a birdie in the



17th. His back nine was no different from the front as he hit bogeys in the second and sixth holes but turned it right with another birdie in the 9th hole.

"I always had a mental problem and I am not yet technically perfect," Varun said, adding "I am learning to keep calm and not thinking too anything but taking it shot by shot."

Crediting his coach Vijay Divecha for his success, Varun said, "Moving the base to Bangalore was

perhaps the best decision me and my family had taken."

"My coach (Vijay) is like a god to me and he was always present whenever I need him," he added.

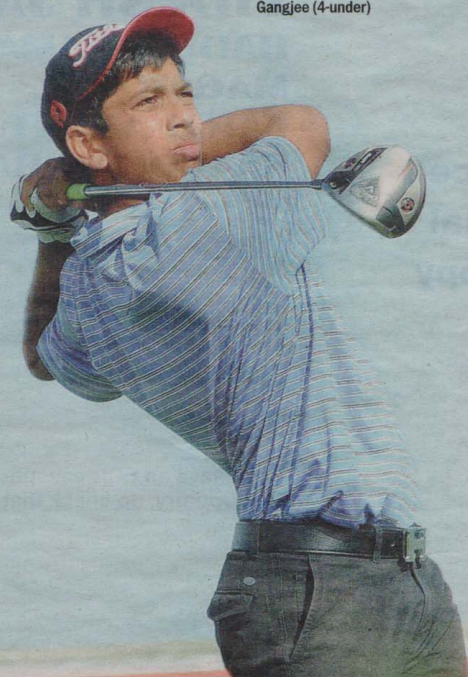
ANSHUL THRIVES ON EXPERIENCE

Though, Anshul Patel, who is also making his PGTI debut, missed the cut - with an 11-over total for a tied 80th - the 18-year-old is happy that he was able to test his mettle and learn from India's best.

"I was not expecting too much but wanted to learn from the professionals first hand. There's so much you can pick from them and the guys I had played had really been helpful for me," the youngster told *Mirror*. "It was a fabulous experience but a big disappointment that I could not make the cut on the course where I play regularly," he added.

"I think I lacked the experience and that's why I feel that we need more tournaments here in Gujarat," he added.

LEADERBOARD: 1. Anirban Lahiri (10-under) 2. Abhinav Lohan (8-under) 3. Angad Cheema, Sujjan Singh, Kanishk Madan, Om Prakash Chouhan & Rahul Gangjee (4-under)



While Varun Parikh (right) shot three over for the day, Anshul Patel (above) carded seven-over for the day