

Jeev ready to end title drought in India

It has been two sleepless nights for Jeev Milkha Singh. It is not the tension on the eve of the one million dollar Hero Honda Indian Open, but just the kind of a gruelling schedule he is trying to keep pace with.

The highest world ranked player in the star-studded field for the Hero Honda Indian Open, Jeev, arrived in Delhi in the early hours Monday.

Then he flew overnight to Doha to hold a clinic for his sponsors, Panceltica. After a clinic and dinner, he again took a night flight to Delhi and reached Tuesday morning.

Earlier Sunday, he completed a Dunhill Links tournament, where the conditions in his words were 'the toughest I ever encountered'. The event was held at three courses, Kingsbarns, Carnoustie and Old Course St. Andrews.

'I have had two nights on planes and it is tiring, which is why I just slept for a while and am going to hit balls at the range now,' said Jeev late in the afternoon and left the practice ground for the Pro-AM.

Reminded that he has on a few occasions done well and even won when he has gone into a tournament without a practice round, Jeev said: 'That's true. It happened in Valderrama (Volvo Masters of [Europe](#) in 2006) and then Austria (BankAustria Open this year) and in Japan once. Maybe I shouldn't play a practice round and just tee up at the tournament.'

The 37-year-old Indian, already a two-time winner this year on European and Japan Tours, is currently ranked 58th, the same position as he was a week earlier.

Jeev, who was tied 24th with a brilliant five-under 67 in the last round of the Alfred Dunhill Links championships, aims to be inside top-50 by the end of 2008.

'It has been a good year, but there is a little work still to be done,' said Jeev.

'It has always been a great feeling to come to India for the Hero Honda Indian Open. I was here for the tournament last year also. For sometime I was not sure whether I would be able to play with my ankle injury, but fortunately, all worked out and here I am.'

Talking about the Delhi Golf Club, Jeev said: 'It is always a tough course in the sense that it can penalize you heavily if you stray. On the other hand, disciplined play can pay rich dividends and fetch great scores.'

'I have not had a look at the course fully. I hope to do that while playing the Pro-Am and then I will work on a game plan,' he said.

The fact that he has won all over Asia and even Europe and Japan, but not in an Asian Tour in India is not lost on Jeev. And the National Open, too, has not yielded good results for Jeev.

'I know that. I want to win my National Open. It is my backyard, but maybe I am not gardening (it)

well enough or watering it well,' said Jeev.

'Every time I come here I try my best. I have come close a few times but hopefully I can end that wait soon.'

Jeev is currently second on the Asian Tour Order of Merit, behind the leader Mark Brown of New Zealand. Jeev is also 10th with earnings of just over Euros 1.17 million.

Admitting that he has had a good season in 2008, he compared it favourably with 2006.

'In 2006 I had not played any Majors. This time I was at the majors with now a top-10 (PGA Championships). Mentally I am stronger now and my game has also improved,' he said.

Jeev needs to stay in top-15, which is now almost certain, to qualify automatically for the US and British Opens. He is currently 10th and with recent results, a return to the PGA Championships, where he was tied ninth this year, is certain.

That will leave only the Augusta Masters, where Jeev has performed creditably last two years. 'A finish in top-50 of world rankings will ensure a third straight return to the Masters,' said Jeev.

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