

Chikkarangappa in lead in Eastern India golf

[Bangalore](#) boy Chikkarangappa extended his lead and increased his chances of defending the Lalit Suri Eastern India title after the completion of the third round at the par-70 Tollygunge Golf Club here Thursday.

A round of even-par 70 put Chikkarangappa at three-under for the tournament, and three shots clear of Kapurthala's Ashbeer Saini.

Saini could only manage a round of two-over 72 and will have to overcome a three-shot gap if he hopes to win the title in the senior-most category after having annexed the title in Category B last year.

The leaderboard in Category B (U-15) wore a completely different look with overnight leader Roshan Raj falling back and two new names, Honey Baisoya and Aman Raj taking over the lead with identical rounds of 71 to total ten-over for the tournament after three rounds.

Chandigarh's Feroze Garewal capitalised on a third-round meltdown from local lad Viraj Madappa to hold sole lead in Category C (U-12) with a tournament total of eight-over 218. With a 78 on the third day, Viraj Madappa is placed second, four shots back.

Arjun Puri continued to hold on to his lead in Category D (U-10), with another round of 12-over 82. But with Arjun Prasad and Karandeep Singh Kochchar breathing down his neck in second place, just one shot back, anyone could win it on the final day.

Chikkarangappa, continuing his quest to keep his name on the silverware, got off to a disastrous start with a bogey and a double bogey in his first three holes. He sprayed his tee shot on the first and as a result had to play his second shot from way right.

Just then, a number of ants got into his shirt, and bit the player which almost forced him to withdraw. But the 16-year-old clawed his way back and with the help of a couple of birdies, and lots of cold water, made the turn at one-over for the round. He made three more birdies on the back-nine against two bogeys to finish level for the day.

Ashbeer, who was expected to put on a strong challenge, never really got the momentum he needed to move ahead and a bogey on the final hole, gave him a round of two-over 72 and helped Chikka extend his lead to three shots.

Speaking after his round, Chikkarangappa said: 'What happened in the beginning of the round has never happened to me before and I was struggling through most of the front-nine. It seems like I had marks all over my back and I just don't know how I managed to continue after that. The pain subsided after a couple of hours and I am glad I didn't drop too many shots because of that. Now that I have a three-shot lead, hopefully I can play well enough tomorrow to win again.'

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