



The winners and runners up in the seventh Albatross tournament.

## Seven up

New Delhi: The Albatross Tour grows from strength to strength. At the Qutab Golf Club, the parents-run circuit marked a year by organizing tournament number seven in August.

Thankfully, there was a breeze to temper the late-monsoon heat. Certainly, the conditions did little to put off 120 young ones congregating at the Capital's only public facility for 18 (or nine) holes in the sun. And, for the first time, there was a category reserved for golf's 'tiny tots'—under-eights played nine holes in Category E (one over-enthusiastic youngster opted to play the full 18!). Clearly, these swingers are

having fun.

There are organizational bottlenecks, for it's impossible to expect super-dedicated mums and dads to run the whole show (as they have been doing over the past year). However, volunteers have been forthcoming: an anchor was acquired for the prize-giving, two young men looked after scoring and a couple of young ladies helped out at the registration desk. Meanwhile, Bailey's bottled water and Amul chipped in to keep the children well hydrated. (At the previous event, equipment brand TaylorMade-Adidas had come on board as prize

sponsors).

As word gets around, each Albatross event attracts a new set of kids. There are new faces teeing it up who might not be conversant with on and off-course etiquette (and who are likely to be greenhorns in tournament golf). At Qutab G.C., a few over-protective parents were seen accompanying their young golfers on their rounds.

A golf event is never the easiest to referee, taking place as it does over a very large playing area. So, to better groom both parents and kids unused to the dos and don'ts of the competitive game, Rajiv Talwar, one of the Albatross Tour's coordinators, said etiquette clinics would be held before each tournament. Despite these teething problems, though, the tour, insists Talwar, will remain open to everybody.

Next up are tournaments in Chandigarh (Chandigarh G.C., October 3) and Jaipur (Rambagh G.C., October 13). These will be conducted by, respectively, the Chandigarh and Jaipur chapters of Albatross as the Tour moves out of the National Capital Region for the first time.

### LEADING SCORES

CATEGORY  
75: SIDDHART BEMWAL7: VICKY SHARMA:  
7: B JIMAMULHAQUE

CATEGORY B  
76: ANKUR CHADHABOPRANA DILAWARI:  
B: AINESHAHLUWALIA

CATEGORY C  
B: AYUSHAJPPALB5: FEROSAREWAB5:  
JAIRASANDHU

CATEGORY  
76: MOHDWASIL77: PIYUSHANGWAN:  
79: AMAN

CATEGORY (9 HOLES)  
50: ADILBEDI63: SAURYMEHTA65:  
KARAN CHANORA

Golf's a batty game, played by batty people in often extreme conditions. Juniors and sub-juniors, eager to tee it up in stifling heat or bone-numbing cold, need to be gently reminded about the risks of putting too much strain on their still-growing bodies.

After the golf at the Qutab, orthopedic surgeon Punit Dilawari gave a talk on what kids need to do to stay in good health. Dr. Dilawari's words were aimed as much at the parents as they were at the children.

Dr. Dilawari spoke of the importance of getting kids motivated to play the game. This father of two—both of whom, Pranay (Category B) and Ridhima (Category D), are budding golfers—touched on the precautions that need to be taken when playing in extreme weather, and on ways to combat injury.

Young golfers will often shrug off aches and pains, in the process doing long-term harm to their bodies. "Don't ignore injuries," urged Dr. Dilawari. To prevent injuries, he advised kids to avoid over-exercising and not to indulge in too much practice. He stressed on the importance of warming up before getting out on to the course (much neglected by juniors), and, also, how a proper diet plays a vital part in keeping you in top shape.

Dr. Dilawari gave tips on the mental side of golf. He asked the youngsters to master their "inner games": To train the mind, he suggested yoga and meditation. Out on the course, Dr. Dilawari advocated a "small steps" approach, concentrating on the process rather than the end result.

And in this success-obsessed age, Dr. Dilawari cautioned parents and their golfing wards about getting too caught up with winning. "Not winning does not mean failure." He also warned on expecting instant results (what he referred to as the "Tiger Woods phenomenon"). "You can't achieve too much too soon."

To conclude, Dr. Dilawari emphasized that keeping mind and body fit will take you far. "A fit body and a sound mind make for a happy golfer." To their credit, the kids were all ears to his tips. They'd certainly do well to keep his wise words in mind.

