

Meet Gurgaon's 8-year-old world champion golfer

Ajay Kumar Gautam

I GOT HIM EVALUATED UNDER A COACH WHO SAID HE WAS THE MOST TALENTED GOLFER HE HAD EVER SEEN

– Dhananjay Singh, Kartik's father

KARTIK SINGH

Under-8 winner, Kids' Golf World Championship, Malaysia

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On any evening, if one goes down to the practice range at the swanky course on Gurgaon's Golf Course Road, invariably, the last person practising will be a diminutive eight-year-old. Kartik Singh, a student of Manav Rachna International School, is known across the DLF Golf and Country Club as one of the most hardworking golfers in the city. The young golfer's work ethic has started reaping dividends for him in competitions now. On December 23, Kartik finished first in the Under-8 age group at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US Kids Golf in Malaysia, making him the youngest Indian to win a junior world title.

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We moved to Gurgaon so Kartik could play better golf: 8-year-old world champion's dad



Kartik Singh finished first in the Under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship. The eight-year-old poses for us at the golf course in Karma Lakelands, Gurgaon

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Kartik started playing golf three years ago and it was only due to his golf training that his family moved to Gurgaon a little over two years ago. "I used to play golf when we were in Kochi," says Kartik's father Dhananjay, a Naval officer, "And once I took him with me to the course. The coach there said Kartik had the best hand-eye coordination he had seen. Sometime later, I took him to Bengaluru and got him evaluated under a coach there, who said he was the most talented golfer he had ever seen. These things led me to believe that we needed to get him trained." With-in two months of his first tryst with the sport, Kartik had grown strong enough to participate in competitions.

The family zeroed in on Gurgaon as their base, given the city's strong infrastructure in golf. "My wife took up a job here (in Gurgaon) and for a while, she and Kartik lived alone here while I was back in Kochi. I only joined them in May. It might seem odd to a lot of people that

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we uprooted our life for his golf, but he has started to show now why that was necessary," says Dhananjay.

But despite his natural talent, the eight-year-old is no slouch when it comes to practice. He started training in Karma Lakelands golf course in Sector 80 when he moved to Gurgaon and today, divides his time between there and the DLF Golf

Course, which is closer to his home. "He loves practising and being out on the course. We try to make sure he practises at least five times a week," informs his father Dhananjay. The father-son duo can often be seen practising till 8-9pm at the course. "I love golf and enjoy playing it a lot. The practice does not seem like work," the eight-year-old prodigy tells us. For now, Kartik is participating in the age-group categories but both he and his family harbour hopes of him going professional and competing with the best in the world one day.

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