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Cool Swedes still real hot

reports on "Women's World Cup Golf 2000" by S. Navalani; Glen Peters
THERE was just no let up from the Swede sisters Annika and Charlotta
Sorenstam as they stormed the greens to open up a three-stroke lead over
Australia after the second round of the US\$1 million (RM3.8 million)
Women's World Cup Golf at The Mines Resort and Golf Club yesterday.

On a day the inaugural tournament attracted a crowd of over 3,000
spectators, among them Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the
Sorenstam sisters provided a sizzling show of golf.

Playing in the fourball betterball format, Annika and Charlotta carded a
score of eight-under-par 64 for a total of 13-under-par 131.

Behind them were Australia's Karrie Webb and Rachel Hetherington who
returned a six-under-par 66 for a 134-total to lie four ahead of two
surprise teams Colombia and Peru.

Both the South American teams came in with 66 and ended the day on 138.

Top seeded United States, with Meg Mallon and Juli Inkster, also
recovered with a six-under-par 66 to be back in contention as they are
tied in fifth spot with Japan's Hiromi Kobayashi and Yuri Fudo, eight
shots off the leaders.

Japan who shot a par-72 on Thursday managed 67 yesterday.

But the rest of the field were just second fiddle to the likes of the
Swede sisters.

Annika and Charlotta nailed four birdies each. They covered the front
nine in four-under-par 32 thanks to two birdies by Annika at the first and
ninth with Charlotta, at the third and seventh holes.

Annika, the world number two, contributed another two birdies on the
back nine at the 11th and 17th holes while Charlotta had two straight
birdies from the 14th.

"We complemented each other very well today. We had to do that if we are
going to win this tournament," said Annika.

"I got off to a great start and then Lotta took over from there. If one
of us was in trouble the other one would help out and maybe even make a
birdie, so we really helped each other."

World number one Karrie led the Australian team. The 25-year-old birdied
four times at the seventh, ninth, 11th and 15th while Rachel fired two
birdies at the 14th and 16th.

"It was pretty steady, but we left a few out there again. I got off to a
pretty sluggish start. We weren't scrambling for pars.

"We had plenty birdie chances, but we weren't making the putts today
like we did yesterday. But all in all six under is a pretty good score,"
said Karrie.

However, there were also plenty of nightmarish moments for Karrie
especially in the last three holes of the round.

First she sent her tee-shot from the 16th hole right to the lake and
then decided not to continue the hole where Rachel sank a superb 30-foot
putt. At the 17th, she sent her second shot into the rough and never
recovered and in the 18th, she had her approach shot to the bunker.

"The 16th was a bad shot. There is nothing else to say about it," said
Karrie. "But it is far from over and remains to be seen tomorrow."

Colombian sisters Marisa and Cristina Baena registered an eagle and five
birdies against a bogey at the last hole while their playing partners Peru
with Jenny Lidback and Alicia Dibos had seven birdies and a bogey.

But it was amateur Cristina who provided the glitter especially with the

eagle at the 11th hole when she used the pitching wedge to score the eagle.

Then at the 15th, her tee shot nearly went into the water when it landed at the edge of the green. But despite the rough and ledge, she used her sand wedge to score a birdie.

"I have just no words to express what had happened," said Cristina. "But it was all good things and I'm not complaining."

As for today's individual scores challenge, where both golfers' scores are counted and combined together with the first two round scores, the Swedish pair said anything can happen. "Like I said tomorrow's two scores, a lot can happen. You can beat one by five and the other by five and that is 10 shots right there, so I wouldn't say that at all, because this is a really a quality field," said Annika.

Karrie also thought that other teams would have a slight chance to deny either Sweden or Australia for the title.

"Both players have to play well to the total score and I don't think seven shots back is out of it," she said.