

Maddie Szeryk captures Women's Western Amateur Title

ELMHURST, Ill. – The Women's Western Golf Association's 117th National Amateur Championship is in the history books.

The tournament was held at River Forest Country Club in Elmhurst, Ill. Maddie Szeryk, London, Ontario, Canada was the victor over Dylan Kim, Sachse, Tex. by a 3 & 1 margin in the 36-hole final.

Szeryk will have her name inscribed on the W. A. Alexander Cup along with such illustrious names as Patty Berg, Louise Suggs, Joanne Gunderson Carner, Beth Daniel, Nancy Lopez, Grace Park, Cristie Kerr, Brittany Lang, Stacy Lewis, and Ariya Jutanugarn to name just a few.

The course was set at 36-36-72, 6,295 yards. It is well-known for its fast and sloped greens and was a test of patience requiring precision shot-making.

In the morning round, Szeryk and Kim traded pars and birdies. By the end of nine, the match was all square. If it had been stroke play, both would have shot 2-under par 34. The only time Szeryk was ever down in the entire match was on the 3rd hole, after that she remained on the plus side..

Szeryk started her charge when she won the 10th hole to go 1-up, then won the 12th, 14th and 17th to own a 3-up margin through 18 of the 36-hole final.

After a short break, the match resumed and Szeryk proceeded to birdie the 1st (19th hole) to go 4-up. Kim birdied the next hole and both made pars on the 155-yard par 3 and the 545-yard par 5. Kim found an opening when she birdied the 5th (23rd) hole only to see Szeryk come back with a birdie on the next hole keeping her 3-up lead. Both parred the next holes and there was another opening for Kim when she birdied the 9th (27th) hole.

At the turn, Szeryk had a 2-up lead; made a 12-foot downhill putt on the 30th hole to go back to a 4-up lead. Once again, they traded birdies, pars and bogeys and by the 34th hole Szeryk was at 2-up and held that lead until she won.

"It was a lot of fun, it's the way you want a championship match to be, Maddie played so well, congratulations to her, she was really tough today," said Kim. "It's tough being 2 down and 2 to go, but I think holes 13 (30) through 16 (33) were a good turning point for me, I started to get some holes back so I felt I had a chance, she birdied the last so there's not much you can do when you're 2 down." She continued, "My birdie on 13 was key, all those partial wedges practices paid off, we work on that all the time."

Kim was at Baylor University but is not sure where she is going next, she said, "I will probably start telling people in July because I will not have made my decision until then. It's going to be out of five (schools)."

During the tournament week, both had played a great deal of golf, nine rounds from the 2-day qualifier to the final 36-hole match and if they had participated in the Contestant-Amateur tournament put on by the club, it would have been a dozen rounds.

“It was a good week, I played some good golf and I learned a lot which is more important because I can build on this, it was a fun course, and for the most part, I’m happy with how I played, but obviously I’m disappointed,” said Kim.

In the afternoon match, Kim was on her game, but so was Szeryk. “I was only 3-up so it was a little comfortable but not much,” said Szeryk. “We still had 18 holes left so I could have gone 3-down but I stuck to my game plan and pretended it was a new match and that we were all square and tried to play my game and keep going.”

“Early on we traded a lot of birdies, it was a good match,” said Szeryk. “When we both hit good drives, we were back and forth.”

Asked about winning this tournament she said, “It’s pretty awesome, it’s great to win a match play tournament,” said Szeryk.

The golf course is in a flight pattern from Chicago O’Hare so there were planes departing and flying overhead. “Noises don’t bother me I feel you have to play like that because when you turn professional there will a lot of people and (always) be some kind of noise so you learn to tune it out.”

“There are two teams for Team Canada, my coach had to go home last night so Coach Ann stayed and took care of me and watched me today,” she continued, “We (our team) have a great coaching staff, we have mental coaches, physio coaches, everything. My grandfather was also here.”

Next she plans to play the B.C. Amateur, either the North/South or the U.S. Open, “I finished first alternate for U.S. Open and was a really strong one so that’s looking good,” she said.

After she graduates from Texas A & M next year she plans on returning to play in the 118th Amateur to defend her title and then will go on to Q School in September.

The 118th WWGA Amateur will be announcing their tournament site for 2018 shortly, please follow the website: www.wwga.org as well as Facebook, WWGA Golf for updated information.

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