

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kate Lillie claims the WWGA 90th National Junior Championship at Blackhawk Country Club

Madison, Wis. (July 15, 2016) ... Unseasonably cool weather greeted the Finalists in the Championship Flight this morning. The skies were gray with a light mist when the final match began. From players representing 13 states and 3 foreign countries, the finalists were both from Illinois.

The no. 5 seed, Kate Lillie, St. Charles, Ill. joined her friend, no. 10 seed Penelope Tir, Winnetka, Ill. at the first tee. Lillie went 1 up on the first hole, a 352 yard par 4 and never lost the lead. The second hole is a two tiered green and the pin was tucked in the back. Tir's chip shot landed on the front tier of the green and rolled back into the fairway as did her second chip and the hole was conceded. On the 3rd hole Tir was on the green in two and Lillie's drive was on the left, her second shot was in the greenside bunker, she chipped on and missed her putt giving the advantage to Tir who won the hole.

They halved the 4th and 5th holes and on the 6th Lillie was in the left fairway bunker and hit a strong iron shot out onto the green winning the hole bringing her back to 2 up.

On the 7th hole, Tir's drive found the out of bounds on the right side of the fairway landing on adjacent railroad tracks forcing her to take a penalty shot and Lillie to go 3 up. On the 8th hole, Lillie's shot landed in the right greenside bunker while Tir's landed on the green; bringing the match back to Lillie 2 up. On the 9th, both drives were in the fairway, their second (blind) shots landed on an elevated green, Lillie still 2 up.

Lillie's second shot found the bunker on the 10th while Tir's second shot was on the green, she 2 putted while Lillie was on in three and after 2 putting Tir won the hole, back to Lillie 1 up.

On the 12th hole, Tir's drive was far right into the trees forcing her to punch out while Lillie had over a 225 yard drive and hit a long second shot just in front of the green, Tir's third shot fell short of the green back to 2 up for Lillie. The 13th par 5 hole, at 516 yards and the 14th, a 245 yard par 4, had both players halving the hole. On the 15th, normally the balls roll north toward Lake Mendota, but both players kept their drives out of trouble and were on the green with their second shots, Lillie 3 putted while Tir had 2 putts. Now Lillie was back to 1 up.

With two holes left to play, Lillie drove the green on the par 3, 134 yard 16th hole and Tir landed in the front bunker missing her par putt, back to 2 up Lillie.

Going to the 17th, a 406 yard, par 5, what they were facing was a steeply sloped fairway, it was now make or break for both players. Tir drove into the tree-lined right rough and had no option but to hit a iron into the fairway which rolled into the left rough. Meanwhile, Lillie hit her second shot onto the green; Tir hit her third shot into the left rough short of the green, another missed shot when she still could not get to the green. Tir was on the green in 5, all Lillie had to do was 3 putt to win, she won the hole and ended the match becoming the 90th WWGA National Champion winning by a 3 & 1 margin.

Lillie stated, *“It was tough to play a friend but I had the mindset needed. I was excited to win. Looking at the names on the trophy and seeing Nancy Lopez and Cristie Kerr’s names, makes you think they were just like you and that I can have a very bright future. It was harder to keep the ball on the greens as the week wore on. This is a beautiful but very hilly course and I found it difficult to walk especially the back nine with all the uphill holes. This is the third time I’ve play match and enjoyed it. I will be a senior this coming year and I’ve committed to University of Minnesota when I graduate.”*

Tir, who will be a sophomore in high school in the fall, said, *“Kate is a great competitor, she doesn’t let her game get to her. I was very pleased with myself and how I played. My dad told me that match play is so different from stroke play, someone can come from behind so he said to play each hole by itself.”*

The 91st WWGA Junior tournament will be held in mid-July at the Dubuque Golf and Country Club, Dubuque, Ia.

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