

Noble gains semis of U.S. Women's Am

MINNEAPOLIS — Karen Noble of the Morris County Golf Club in Convent Station, N.J., who won her second consecutive New Jersey Women's Amateur Championship two weeks ago, yesterday moved into the semifinal round of the U.S. Women's Amateur at the Minikahda Club by beating two former champions.

She started her day when she ousted a veteran golfer, Carol Semple Thompson of Sewickley, Pa., 1 up, with a par on the 18th hole. Semple Thompson won the Amateur in 1973 and was the runnerup the following season.

Then Noble, the Metropolitan Golf Association's Match-Play champion,

raced to a 5 and 4 victory over another veteran, Anne Sander of Seattle, the reigning senior Amateur champion who won the United States Golf Association Amateur three times and was the runnerup three other times.

Noble, a Wake Forest senior who will celebrate her 21st birthday Aug. 23, has another former champion to face in the semifinal round today — 1985 winner Michiko Hattori of Japan, who had her own problems. Hattori had to play a total of 38 holes to advance, making it through the quarterfinals by beating Caroline Keggi of Waterbury, Conn., 1 up in 18.

"I always wanted to play someone of her reputation," Noble said of her morning match with Semple Thompson. "But beating two of them in the same day is really something."

"I told myself that I wanted to have some fun. I told myself that all day so I would stay calm."

And calm she stayed — particularly through the match with Sander.

She was one under for that match, play she described as "my best of the tournament."

She started off with two winning birdies but gave back a hole when she bogeyed the third. Noble made the turn 2 up.

Both missed the green at the 10th but Noble got up and down for her par to win the hole and go 3 up. She added to her lead with a winning par at the 12th and birdie at the 13th. When both parred the 14th, it was over.

The other half of the draw today will match Pearl Sinn of Bellflower, Calif., with Pat Milton of Akron, Ohio.

Sinn beat Evelyn Orlen of Switzerland in a 20-hole match and Milton ousted Delphine Bourson of France, 2 and 1.

Noble wins on 19th,

reaches Am final

Tops Hattori; to face Sinn for U.S. title

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Karen Noble, New Jersey's leading women amateur golfer, needs one more upset to claim the prestigious 88th U.S. Women's Amateur championship.

The 20-year-old Noble continued her giant-killing performance yesterday when she went 19 holes to stun Michiko Hattori of Nagoya, Japan, at the Minikahda Club. Today, the reigning New Jersey Amateur and Metropolitan Women's Match-Play champion will oppose another favored opponent, Pearl Sinn of Bellflower, Calif., in a scheduled 36-hole final. Sinn is the 1988 U.S. Women's Public Links champion and the Amateur tournament's qualifying medalist.

Noble, who will enter her senior year at Wake Forest University next month, surprised Carol Semple Thompson and Anne Sander before edging Hattori with a birdie on the first extra hole. Her three victims have combined to win five U.S. Amateur, two British Amateur and a U.S. Senior title and made 12 Curtis Cup appearances.

"I have played the best golf of my life, particularly against Hattori," said Noble, who plays out of the Morris County Golf Club. "Now I have to get past one more giant."

Noble credits David Glenz, head pro at Morris County, for her vast improvement during the last three years.

"He has made my game simpler, grooved my swing and taught me course management," explained Noble.

And, when Noble tees up today against Sinn, Glenz may be there to offer on-site encouragement. Glenz yesterday failed to make the cut in the U.S. PGA tournament in Oklahoma, carding a 78 after an opening 79, and was planning to fly to Minneapolis.

"It gives me greater satisfaction to see one of my students do so well in the Amateur than for me to make the cut here at the PGA," a thrilled Glenz claimed.

Noble hit a sand wedge over the flagstick on the extra hole and her ball curled back to within two feet for a birdie putt to oust the two-time Japanese Women's champion.

The New Jersey star and Hattori each played two-under par golf to be even at the turn. Hattori won the 10th with a birdie, but Noble went in front with winning pars on the 11th and 12th holes. Hattori then evened the match with a birdie on No. 13. The players parred the final five holes of regulation play with Noble saving par on the 18th hole by sinking a tricky seven-footer.

"I knew I needed birdies and pars to win this match," Noble said. "In earlier matches, par golf was all I needed to win. I've never played in front of that many people before. I kind of enjoyed it. This is really exciting."

Dream putt puts Noble in final

By Jon Roe
Staff Writer

It's a putt that Karen Noble had faced many times. But only in her dreams. Or back home in Convent Station, N.J., on the practice green.

"And then we're only playing for who is going to buy dessert or dinner," Noble said.

But the 7-footer on the 18th green Friday at Minikahda Club would decide if Noble would remain in the 1988 U.S. Women's Amateur. The putt to save par also would determine if Noble would send her semifinal match against Michiko Hattori into a sudden-death playoff and decide who would face Pearl Sinn in today's 36-hole championship match.

"It seemed about 100 feet long," Noble said.

"I believed she could make it," Hattori said. "She has been a great putter all day."