

Platt, Gardner, Cimaglia take their games on the road

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For golfers, sometimes what you gain off the course is better than what you do on the course.

Just ask three Westchester residents who took their games to both the United States Women's Open and U.S. Men's Senior Open.

"Playing in any pro tournament is a great experience, but playing in an Open is just totally different," said Margaret Platt, a resident of Elmsford who qualified to play last weekend in the women's Open. "I played last year in the Corning Classic, which is a Tour event, but this was my first Open. You learn so much from the other players.

"I played with Cindy Mackey and when things got tough for me she kept encouraging me. She told me to keep my composure and just play my game. The pros are really nice and it's funny how they keep helping

you even though they're competing against you."

The 18-year-old Platt, who plays out of Knollwood CC and is under the tutelage of Quaker Ridge head pro Jim McLean, did not make the cut at the Open, but said the experience will further her career. She will enter her sophomore year at Auburn University in the fall.

Kim Gardner, who recently moved to Mamaroneck from Paris, made the cut at the Open. The 20-year-old Tulsa University student didn't allow the bad weather and distractions to bother her. Play was stopped three times because of rain and a toxic fire nearby and a minor earthquake disrupted play two other times.

"Kim is a good player," said Platt. "She's been playing a little longer collegiately and I think the experience payed off. You can tell the experienced players from the younger one's. When it's your first time you kind of get caught up in it being the United States Open."