



Photos by Jim Pathe

Jeff Thomas (left) tees off for Metropolitan Golf Association team during Fred Cup competition yesterday at Baltusrol. Donna Young (right photo) also on MGA team, watches approach shot to green

Women give U.S. boost in French / American golf

The women on the Metropolitan team, most notably Donna Young of Springdale and Karen Durkin of Westchester, turned the tables on the French yesterday in the opening round of the French/American Challenge Matches at the Lower Course of the Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield.

In last year's inaugural competition at the Chantilly Golf Course near Paris, the Met aggregation, comprised of six men and four women picked by the Metropolitan Golf Association, was swept clean in the distaff division by their French counterparts. The women failed to win a single point in eight matches, and the French wound up winning the two-day affair, 15-5.

But, yesterday, the Met took a commanding 7-3 lead with the help of 2½ points, out of a possible four, from the women's side in the foursomes and four-ball matches.

"I think last year our ladies thought that the matches were more of a social thing than a golf competition and didn't take it quite as seriously as the French women," said Long Island's John Baldwin of Meadowbrook, who earned one point for the Met when he teamed with New Yorker Joe Sommers of Mt. Kisco for a 4-and-3 foursomes triumph over Michel Gayon and Oliver Dupas.

"We knew that we couldn't do any worse than last year," said Young, who teamed with Durkin to gain two points. Neither played in last year's event.

"I felt a little pressure playing today because it is such an honor to be selected to the team," added Young. "It's been great, though. The men have

been real supportive."

Young, runner-up in the 1990 New Jersey Women's Amateur, and Durkin, the 1991 Women's Met Match-Play champion, rallied to defeat France's Carole Marty and Laurence Rozner, 1 up, in the morning's foursomes. The American duo was 1 down after the 15th hole, but parred the 114-yard 16th to square the match, halved the 17th and won the par-five 18th with a par.

In the afternoon's four-ball, Young and Durkin went 3 up on Marty and Rozner when Young holed out from 30 yards off the green for a birdie three at the fifth hole. The lead was extended to 5 up with a par on the 10th.

The Met's Lisa Griffin of Greenwich (Conn.) and Gail Flanagan of Westchester, also new to the team, contributed a half point when they halved Geraldine Spencer and Anne Lanrezac in the foursomes. Spencer and Lanrezac won the four-ball, 1 up, on the latter's par at the 18th.

The first team to reach 10½ total points when the matches conclude today with 10 singles settos will take possession of the emblematic Fred Cup, which has been provided by tournament sponsor and international jeweler Fred Joaillier. Joaillier conceived the idea of the matches to foster sportsmanship and goodwill between the two countries.

The Met men were led by seven-time and current state Amateur champion Jeff Thomas of Plainfield West and Sommers.

Thomas teamed with five-time Met Amateur champion George Zahringer of Stanwich (Conn.) to defeat Gregoire Brizay and Christophe Ravetto, 4 and 3, in foursomes, and joined forces with former British Amateur champion and Met team captain Dick Siderowf of Century (N.Y.) to beat Francois Illouz and Pascal Grizot, 3 and 2, in four-ball. In the afternoon match, Thomas' 50-foot birdie putt at the 14th and winning pars by the Met duo at the 15th and 16th ended matters.

Thomas believed that his familiarity with the 7,138-yard course helped.

"I've never seen the course play this long. The rain the other night made

it real soft," said Thomas, who has played in the Baltusrol Invitational several times. "There is a lot of local knowledge needed on the greens because every putt breaks away from the mountain."

Sommers blended shots with Baldwin to defeat Oliver Dupas and Michel Gayon, 4 and 3, in foursomes and then combined with 1990 and '91 Met Ike champion Jerry Courville Jr. of Shorehaven (Conn.) to dispense with Brizay and Gayon, also 4 and 3.

"When you have great partners like John Baldwin and Jerry Courville, you feel like you can swing free and easy," explained Sommers. "This is the most fun I've ever had in golf."

The French got their only victory of the day when Dupas, the five-time French National champion, and the 17-year-old Ravetto outlasted Baldwin and Zahringer, 1 up, in four-ball.

Dupas and Ravetto took a 2-up lead when they won the 11th with a par, but Zahringer birdied the 13th and 15th with 10-foot putts to square the match. The teams halved the 16th and 17th, the latter with birdies, before the French captured the match on Dupas' birdie at the 18th, where he had reached the green on his second shot with a three wood.

"You've got to hand it to them, they did it when they had to and birdied the last two holes," said Baldwin.

METROPOLITAN 7, FRANCE 3

FOURSOMES

METROPOLITAN 4, FRANCE 1

Jeff Thomas and George Zahringer 3d, Met., def. Gregoire Brizay and Christophe Ravetto, 4 and 3.

Dick Siderowf and Jerry Courville Jr., Met., halved with Francois Illouz and Pascal Grizot.

John Baldwin and Joe Sommers, Met., def. Michel Gayon and Oliver Dupas, 4 and 3.

Lisa Griffin and Gail Flanagan, Met., halved with Geraldine Spencer and Anne Lanrezac.

Karen Durkin and Donna Young, Met., def. Carole Marty and Laurence Rozner, 1 up.

FOUR-BALL

METROPOLITAN 3, FRANCE 2

Ravetto and Dupas, France, def. Baldwin and Zahringer, 1 up.

Siderowf and Thomas, Met., def. Illouz and Grizot, 3 and 2.

Courville and Sommers, Met., def. Brizay and Gayon, 4 and 3.

Laurezac and Spencer, France, def. Griffin and Flangan, 1 up.

Durkin and Young, Met., def. Marty and Rozner, 4 and 2.

***Metropolitans
defeat French
for Fred Cup***

The Metropolitan team, aided by its familiarity with Baltusrol's famed Lower Course, was lifted by the strong shotmaking of state Amateur champion Jeff Thomas, Joe Sommers and Karen Durkin in yesterday's singles play against the French and avenged last year's loss to capture the second French/American Challenge Matches.

The Met team, comprised of six men selected by the Metropolitan Golf Association and four women chosen by the Women's MGA, won 7½ points out of a possible 10 in the singles to overwhelm the French in the two-day tournament, 14½-5½, and take possession of the emblematic Fred Cup offered by the sponsor of the matches, international jeweler Fred Joaillier. The French had won the inaugural, 15-5, at the Chantilly Golf Course near Paris last year.

The Met team had come into the final day with a 7-3 lead off Saturday's foursomes and four-ball matches.

The Met men agreed that Baltusrol's 7,138-yard length played into their hands.

"Our length off the tee was a big factor," said Sommers, a member at New York's Mt. Kisco. "We have guys like Jerry Courville, George Zahringer and myself who hit it a long way.

"We certainly wanted to win this on our home soil," added Sommers, a newcomer to the team, who defeated Pascal Grizot in singles, 5 and 4, and finished with a total of three match-play points for the weekend. "There was plenty of incentive there for us."

"The home course and home country advantage was a big difference," said Baldwin of Long Island's Meadow Brook, who defeated Michel Gayon, 2 and 1. Baldwin was a member of last year's team, as well. "You feel more comfortable playing at home while they have to deal with the traveling and time change."

Thomas of Plainfield West, who won his seventh New Jersey Amateur in June and has captured five Stamford (Conn.) City Amateur titles, and Durkin of New York's Westchester, the 1991 WMGA Match-Play champion, each won their singles matches and accounted for three points apiece over the weekend.

Thomas, who has played in the annual Baltusrol Invitational and has a read on the course that will host the 1993 U.S. Open, putted extremely well in his setto with Gregoire Brizay.

"I got off to a really good start," said Thomas, who birdied the first two holes, made the turn with a 5-up advantage and won, 5 and 4. "I putted really well because I got a tip from a friend last night who told me to take the putter back slower. It seemed to work."

The 38-year-old Sommers, who didn't start playing golf until he was 23, was very excited to be selected to the team and, with his play, proved that he was deserving of the honor.

"I would say coming into this that I was the sixth man on a six-man team," said Sommers. "But I felt real confident and hit the ball real well the past couple of weeks. I was very comfortable and relaxed out there."

“Joe has not played in a lot of different competitions, so it looks like he has just emerged the last couple of years,” said Baldwin. “But he came out and played like a seasoned veteran this week.”

Sommers birdied the first and seventh holes against Grizot and held a 6-up lead after eight holes.

Zahringer of Connecticut's Stanwich, the five-time Met Amateur champion, rallied to defeat Francois Illouz, 5 and 3. Illouz, who finished second in the European Amateur this year, had a 2-up lead after five holes, but Zahringer birdied the sixth and eagled the seventh with putts of eight and 10 feet to pull even.

“He actually had a chance to go 3 up on the fifth, but missed a five-footer,” Zahringer related. “Then, I came back on the sixth and seventh. There was definitely a shift in momentum there.”

Zahringer won the ninth hole with a par to go 1 up and captured the 12th through 14th to take a 4-up advantage.

Courville of Connecticut's Shorehaven, the 1990 and '91 Met Ike champion, earned a halve with Christophe Ravetto, while playing captain Dick Siderowf of New York's Century, a two-time British Amateur champion and three-time Walker Cup team member, fell to Oliver Dupas, 2 up, the only loss in singles by the Met men.

The Met women accounted for 5½ points, a vast improvement over last year when the distaff segment was shut out in all eight foursomes, four-ball and singles matches.

"I'm terribly proud of them," said the women's non-playing captain, Ann Probert of Somerset Hills, who played last year, as well. "They all played consistently and very well. This year, we may have put the team together a little more thoughtfully and picked players based on their play this year."

Gail Flanagan of New York's Westchester went out in the first group of the day and gave the Met team its first point with a 3-and-2 victory over Anne Lanrezac. Flanagan won the eighth through 11th holes for a 4-up lead.

"She had a lot of putting trouble today and I took advantage of that," said the 28-year-old Flanagan. "These

greens are so slick that once you lose your confidence, you're in trouble, and that's what happened to Anne."

Durkin, who played Carole Marty, lost the 11th hole to fall to even in the match, but took control by winning the 12th and 13th with pars.

Lisa Griffin of Connecticut's Greenwich defeated Geraldine Spencer, 3 and 2.

FINAL TWO-DAY TOTAL
METROPOLITAN 14½, FRANCE 5½
Yesterday
Singles

Metropolitan 7½, France 2½

Gail Flanagan, Met., def. Anne Lanrezac, 3 and 2.

Karen Durkin, Met., def. Carole Marty, 3 and 2.

Laurence Rozner, France, def. Donna Young, 2 and

1.

Lisa Griffin, Met., def. Geraldine Spencer, 3 and 2.

George Zahringer 3d, Met., def. Francois Illouz, 5 and 3.

John Baldwin, Met., def. Michel Gayon, 2 and 1.

Jeff Thomas, Met., def. Gregoire Brizay, 5 and 4.

Oliver Dupas, France, def. Dick Siderowf, 2 up.

Joe Sommers, Met., def. Pascal Grizot, 5 and 4.

Jerry Courville Jr., Met., halved with Christophe Ravetto.