

Doniger defeats Young, meets Durkin in final

By JOHN RUYZAM

Debbie Doniger of Connecticut's Fairview, the No. 1 golfer for the University of North Carolina's women's golf team this past spring, yesterday continued her steady play in the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association's 88th Match-Play Championship at the Montclair Golf Club in West Orange.

Doniger defeated one of New Jersey's premier amateurs, Donna Young of Springdale, 2 and 1, in the semifinals on the heels of Wednesday's 6-and-5 quarterfinal victory over another titled opponent from the state, Helen Aitken of Montclair.

Doniger will meet Karen Durkin of Westchester in today's 36-hole final. Durkin, a Stamford (Conn.) City Championship winner in 1986 and '87, advanced with a 3-and-1 victory over Westchester clubmate Reggie Hawes.

Doniger, an effervescent 21-year-old, recently completed her junior year at North Carolina, where she finished third, seventh and 11th in three college tournaments. She credits teaching pro Jim McLean of New York's Sleepy Hollow for her success.

"I had no confidence at all playing in the fall," said the 5-5, 120-pound Doniger, a scholastic All-America at Greenwich (Conn.) High in 1987. "Jim helped me with my swing in the spring and I've been playing much better. I've regained my confidence."

Doniger took early control of her match against Young, the 1990 and '91 Garden State Women's Stroke-Play champion and last year's state Amateur finalist, by winning the second, third, sixth and seventh holes, the latter with a six-foot birdie putt. She lost the fifth and eighth with three-putt bogeys, but rolled in a seven-footer for birdie at the 10th for a 3-up lead.

Young sank a 35-foot par putt to win the 11th, but the two halved the remaining holes through the 17th.

"After 11, Donna really hung in there and made me work," said Doniger, who qualified for the U.S. Amateur two years ago, reached the quarterfinals of the Western Amateur and placed 10th in the Eastern last year. "Just when I thought I had a hole won, she'd make a shot and we'd halve it."

Durkin, 26, who won the women's club championship at Westchester last year and has two top-five finishes in the Connecticut Amateur, birdied the first three holes but was only 1-up on Hawes, who birdied the second and third. Durkin lost the sixth to par, but regained her 1-up advantage with a par on the seventh. Durkin three-putted to lose No. 9, but won the 12th and 15th holes with pars and closed out with a winning par on 17.

"Reggie Hawes is a great player. I grew up hearing about her at Westchester," said Durkin. "But my biggest concern was playing Jean Crawford (of Apawamis) on Wednesday in the quarterfinals. She's a former member of the Curtis Cup Team. I was 3-down after seven and came back to beat Jean. That gave my confidence a big boost coming into today's round."