

Griffin leads Women's Met

By Rick Remsnyder

Staff Writer

Greenwich amateur star Lisa Griffin isn't one to shy away from leading a golf tournament. Even if she wasn't one of the favorites entering yesterday's opening round of the fifth Women's Metropolitan Open Championship at cold and windy Metropolis Country Club.

Informed that a 4-over-par 77 left her two strokes ahead of her six closest pursuers heading into today's final round, the 33-year-old automobile salesperson couldn't hide her glee.

"Yesssss," she said, clenching a fist and sounding like sportscaster Marv Albert. "I've usually placed pretty well in this tournament, but I've never really felt like I could win it. Now my chances are as good as anyone."

Griffin, one of 46 amateurs in the original 90-woman field, said she enjoys the opportunity to play against some of the Metropolitan PGA Section's best professionals in the 36-hole event. She would like to join Margaret Platt (1988) and Laura D'Alessandro (1989) who have won as amateurs.

"I enjoy meeting the pros and I try to learn something from them," Griffin said. "But I also want to beat them. It would be a delight to hang on tomorrow."

Included in the six-way tie for second at 79 is Metropolis teaching pro Angela Aulenti, Kammy Maxfeldt of Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, Kim Gardiner of Mamaroneck's Winged Foot Golf Club and Kelley Markette of Leewood Golf Club in Eastchester.

Platt, the defending champion who is in her first year on the LPGA Tour, opened with an 82.

Aulenti said yesterday's strong winds made the 5,914-yard par-73 course play more like 6,400 yards.

"With the wind, par was 76 or 77," Aulenti said. "Because the wind was swirling, it seemed like it was always against you. I usually hit a drive and 9-iron or wedge on No. 2 (a 342-yard par-4) and today I hit a driver and 4-iron. And the greens were the fastest I've seen all year."

Griffin, a six-time club champion at Greenwich Country Club and a four-time winner of the Women's Tri-County Golf Association Championship, fashioned her round with a masterful short game.

Griffin one-putted four times on the back nine (her front) to shoot a 1-under 35. She saved par from greenside bunkers three times.

If the windy conditions persist, Griffin predicted a 2-over 75 by any of the contenders might be good enough to win today.