

# Match Play Championship

It was June 13th, a hot and humid summer day, when fifty-eight women set out to qualify for the WMGA's 91st Match Play Championship at the Knickerbocker Country Club. The Donald Ross course, located in Bergen County, New Jersey, was in perfect condition. Green Superintendent, Sam Juliano, an apprentice at the Oakmont Country Club during the 1983 U.S. Open, had carefully prepared the course for tournament play.

One by one the players lined up at the first tee ready for a challenge, while the seemingly passive greens waited patiently for the first thud and roll of a golf ball to show off their speed and test the player's tenacity. On the first day, only Allison Wojnas of Plainfield broke 80, capturing the medalist honors with a score of 79. The Match Play field slowly took shape and was firmly established after an exciting play-off of seven players whose score of 84 left them vying for a position in the Championship Flight.

The following day, thirty-two women, from twenty-six different clubs in the tri-state area, set out in the oppressive heat to begin their matches. By the end of the second round, eight players, exhausted but victorious, remained in the field. In the Championship Flight, Lee Ann Vogel, the defending Match Play champion, of Southward Ho, would meet Maura Waters, of Montclair, and Robin Rombough, of Montclair would meet fellow club member Helen Aitken. In the Sanford Cup, Helen Bernstein of Alpine would meet fellow club member Lynn Landou, and Mary Holle of Essex County would meet Diana D'Alessio of Newton.

The results of the semi-finals in the Championship Flight left Maura Waters and Helen Aitken, both winning 2 and 1 over their



**Championship**  
**(L) Helen Aitken — Winner**  
**(R) Maura Waters — Runner-Up**

opponents, in contention for the 36-hole Championship. In the Sanford Cup, Helen Bernstein would meet Diana D'Alessio in an 18-hole match.

The finals were sure to be a test of both endurance and skill. After three days of playing in brutal temperatures, the players were beginning to feel a little worn out. Helen Aitken, a member of the winning team of the Griscom Cup in 1993, and Maura Waters, the winner of the 1992 NJ State Amateur, had fought their way to the finals, and now, the two friends from Montclair faced each other in the ultimate contest.

Helen was striking the ball well and seemed to take control of the match on the back nine holes when she birdied 11, 14 and 17. Maura struggled with her drives, admitting later that



**Sanford Cup**  
**(L) Helen Bernstein — Runner-Up**  
**(R) Diana D'Alessio — Winner**

she was over swinging off the tee and that she had been forced to scramble all week long because of it. By the afternoon round Helen had built a seven-hole lead, and although Maura did start to make a comeback on the final stretch, she was unable to beat the consistent and decisive play exhibited by Helen Aitken, who won the 91st Match Play Championship on the 31st hole.

Earlier in the day, the Sanford Cup was won by Diana D'Alessio who defeated Helen Bernstein. Diana, a sophomore at Furman University, played a strong and steady match and even though Helen had impressive victories over her other opponents, she could not deter the powerful Diana.

**Deborah Deck Salvatore**  
*Match Play Chairman*