

Hershberger's run ends with loss in final

By Kate Smith

By the time Madeleine Hershberger of Twin Brooks in Watchung was through playing on the Swedish National Team and for Florida International University, she was tired of competitive golf.

She was sick of the pressure and the amount of time the sport consumed, so she quit, sort of. The Basking Ridge resident cut her course load to 10 rounds a year and, with the exception of a state Amateur appearance in 1994, eliminated competition from her game for six years.

But this year was different. This year, she wanted to compete. And in her first season of competition, Hershberger this past week charged

through three difficult matches to get into yesterday's final of the 97th Women's Metropolitan Golf Association Match-Play Championship at the Morris County Golf Club in Convent Station. Her run ended with a 4-and-3 loss to New Yorker Lee Ann Vogel of Southward Ho in the 36-hole final. Vogel also was the 1993 champion.

But, Hershberger was happy to simply be back on the competitive circuit.

"I'm not nervous in competition anymore," she said. "I'm so grateful to be here and be playing nice courses."

Hershberger, a resident of Basking Ridge and the mother of two, started playing regularly when Deb Agran joined Twin Brooks this year. They became friends and golfing bud-

dies, playing together two times a week.

"She really inspired me," Hershberger said.

Agran walked with her friend during yesterday's final.

"I knew she would do great," Agran said. "It was just a matter of convincing her to set aside the time away from her family. She has the game. Her game was a little off today, but you'll see her name a lot more. She's a quality golfer and a quality person, and that combination makes for success."

While unhappy with her putting in the final, Hershberger recognized what she had accomplished after so many years away from the game.

"I'm happy," she said about her play the past week. "I just need to

work on my short game. My putting is usually good and today it was not good. Or it wasn't good enough. She putted wonderfully."

Vogel was 2 up after 27 holes and won the 30th and 32nd to go 4 up. They halved the 33rd hole to end the match.

"Winning the second time is definitely better," Vogel said. "After you win, as the years go by and you keep finishing worse, you can't understand why you can't win again. The last few years, I kept losing in the first round. This year, I was just happy to get past that. I think that made it easier, lowering my expectations."

Shirley Budden of Burning Tree (Conn.) won the consolation Sanford flight with a 6-and-4 victory over Jackie Quinn of Osiris (N.Y.).