

And, then there were two! Vogel and Hershberger Reach Finals of the 97th Match Play Championship

On a day for which sunshine had been promised, the four golfers remaining in the championship flight---3rd seed and Basking Ridge, NJ, resident Judy Cuttone, 5th seed Lee Ann Vogel from West Gilgo Beach, NY, 7th seed Madeline Hershberger from Basking Ridge, and from Mahwah, NJ, the 9th seed Katie Allison---appeared on the first tee at Morris County Golf Club, Convent Station, NJ, in long sleeves and sweaters with umbrellas at the ready.

The first pairing off the tee at the 5,773-yard, par-73 (38-35) course was Vogel and Allison. Vogel later said that both she and Allison had been quite tentative through the 6th hole; then Allison reached the 397-yard, uphill 9th hole in two and sank the putt for a birdie. When she followed with a birdie at the 10th, she was 2 up. "I was able to steady myself, however," said Vogel. Allison then lost three in a row (12, 13, and 14) to give Vogel the final boost of adrenaline she needed to close out the match on the 17th, 2 & 1. Vogel was Champion in 1993.

In the bottom half of the draw, Cuttone and Hershberger had an incredibly even match; neither was up or down by more than 1 hole at any point and had to play 3 extra holes before Hershberger sank a dramatic, sharp-breaking 12 foot putt on the tricky 3rd hole, a 121-yard par-3 to which both players had hit wonderful shots. Cuttone's putt of about 20 feet just missed the cup. "The match came down to putting," said Hershberger. "She never missed a fairway and we were shot for shot the entire way around: there weren't many putts conceded. I liked the course and the set-up; it was long and tough---the way it should be in a Championship."

The two will play the 36-hole final match tomorrow beginning at 8:00 a.m.

In the Sanford Cup competition, tournament-tough Shirley Budden from Greenwich, CT, bested 18-year-old Franklin Lakes, NJ, resident, Kara Gropler. Gropler had played 44 holes yesterday in her two matches, but said fatigue was not a factor. She was 2 up after 10 but then said Budden began "to make great shots." Budden eventually prevailed, 3 & 2. Gropler almost sounded relieved it was over; she parted with, "This course is so hilly."

The bottom half of the draw had its top player make it to the finals, when New Paltz, NY, native Jackie Quinn ousted Mendham resident and WMGA President, Brigid Lamb, 3 & 2. Quinn is a veteran of Match Play, most recently as a member of the WMGA's victorious Griscom Cup team.

The Sanford Cup final is an 18-hole match, which will begin at 8:08.