

Former Pro MacLean Readjusting to Championship Amateur Golf

SEPTEMBER 11, 2017 | PORTLAND, ORE.

By Tom Mackin

In the last three months, Adrienne MacLean, of Basking Ridge, N.J., moved one son into college while helping another start a professional hockey career in Canada. Her husband John accepted a new job across the country in Arizona as an assistant coach with the NHL's Phoenix Coyotes, so there was a house-hunting trip in Scottsdale. She's been dealing with ongoing back issues, and friends from Florida who escaped Hurricane Irma were living in the family's former home in North Carolina.

Then this past Wednesday, after arriving in Portland for the 2017 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur Championship, an offer was made on the family's current home. She spent time before and after her stroke-play rounds (shooting 79-82) on the phone negotiating the sale, reaching an agreement on Sunday.

So even though she lost Monday in the first round of match play to Marie-Therese Torti, of Canada, after some poor putting on the 18th hole, MacLean deserves credit for simply remaining focused enough to advance through stroke play.

Still, the loss stung the 52-year-old, who played professionally on the Futures Tour in the early 1990s before being reinstated as amateur in 1996.

"I basically served it up on a silver platter," she said. "I've been having issues in lining up my putter. I also had speed issues and struggled with trusting myself on the greens."

MacLean also lost on the 18th hole in the first round of match play in the 2015 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur to Sophie Pfeiffer, of France, at Hillwood Country Club in Nashville, Tenn.

"I felt better after that loss because I didn't give it away," said MacLean. "She beat me. Today, I just beat myself, not to take anything away from my opponent. I had nothing left. Now I know why so many people take carts."

MacLean had been playing solid golf this year, too. In the first round of the New Jersey Women's State Amateur, she defeated Alice Chen (who teamed with Taylor Totland in May to win the 2017 U.S. Women's Amateur Four-Ball at The Dunes Golf & Beach Club in Myrtle Beach, S.C.) before losing a quarterfinal match in 19 holes.

She also finished second in the New Jersey Women's Mid-Amateur Championship, three strokes behind Tara Fleming, who advanced to the second round of match play at Waverley Country Club.

MacLean, a New York native, is no stranger to USGA championships, having played in 16, beginning with the 1981 Girls' Junior at Illahe Hills Country Club in Salem, Ore., where she defeated Danielle Ammaccapane, 3 and 2, in the first round.

"She was so beside herself afterward," said MacLean, who then lost in the second round. "She didn't know who I was and it was my first national tournament."

MacLean also played for New Jersey in the 2015 USGA Women's State Team Championship at Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau, Mo. The team finished 21st.

"The one constant with the USGA championships is you know it will be a first-class event," she said. "You're treated so well and the courses are amazing. Everything is outstanding. And it's consistently been that way in every one I have played."

MacLean is still looking to reach a new comfort level in national championships.

"I was never nervous watching John play hockey because he could always handle himself," she said. "I am nervous watching my sons play. But I'm really nervous playing golf at this level. I hate to admit that. I wish I could be more settled. I just have to play more and get myself in these positions more often."

MacLean is now looking forward to some downtime after the recent hectic months.

"All of us are in a good place now," she said. "My husband is right where he needs to be. My oldest boy is realizing a dream of playing Division-I hockey at Clarkson University. My younger son is playing on the same hockey team (Oshawa Generals) that my husband played for when he was young. So it's all good."

Watching her husband, whom she married in 1991, reach the pinnacle of his career twice – winning the Stanley Cup as a player with the New Jersey Devils in 1995 and again as an assistant coach in 2003 – provided a valuable lesson she is applying to her golf career.

“He just knew if things weren’t going well, they would always get better as long as you kept at it,” she said. “I’ve also learned that it’s just golf. Sometimes, you really muck it up, unfortunately. All in all, with everything that’s been going on, I’m very lucky.”

Tom Mackin is an Arizona-based freelance writer who frequently contributes to USGA websites.