**Heck Earns Medalist Honors, Top Seed at Woodmont C.C.**

By Mike Trostel, USGA

**What Happened**

Rachel Heck gained national attention when she made the cut in the 2017 U.S. Women’s Open as a 15-year-old. Now three years later, she has loftier aspirations than just playing the weekend.

Heck shot a 1-under-par 71 in the second round of stroke play on Wednesday to earn medalist honors in the 120th U.S. Women’s Amateur Championship at Woodmont Country Club. Her 36-hole total of 4-under 140 made her one of just seven players to break par in stroke play, the fewest since 2014.

Heck, 18, of Memphis, Tenn., is competing in her fourth consecutive U.S. Women’s Amateur. She birdied four of her first eight holes in Round 2 and was one of three competitors in the 132-player field to post consecutive sub-par scores.

“The course is in perfect condition,” said Heck, an incoming freshman at Stanford University. “It’s pretty tight, so we were focusing on hitting fairways, hitting greens, not trying to do anything crazy. That's kind of been my game plan and it’s worked out well so far.”

Three players finished two strokes behind Heck at 2-under 142 – Phoebe Brinker, of Wilmington, Del.; Valery Plata, of Colombia; and the No. 4 player in the Women’s World Amateur Golf Ranking, Emilia Migliaccio, of Cary, N.C. First-round co-leader Rachel Kuehn rebounded from a tough start to earn the No. 8 seed. Starting on the 10th hole, she bogeyed the 11th and triple-bogeyed the 12th before playing even-par golf the rest of the way.

Playing with Kuehn, defending champion Gabriela Ruffels, of Australia, bogeyed two of her first three holes, but played her final 15 holes bogey-free. Three birdies coming in led to a 1-under 71 and earned her the No. 6 seed in her title defense.

Other notable players to make the match-play field include first-round co-leader Riley Smyth, 2019 U.S. Women’s Open low amateur Gina Kim and 2019 U.S. Women’s Amateur semifinalist Megha Ganne.

Kajal Mistry recorded the biggest turnaround of the day. Mistry, 19, who represented South Africa in the 2018 Women’s World Amateur Team Championship, tied the low round of the day with a 3-under 69 – an improvement of 12 strokes from her opening 81. She then survived a 15-for-6 playoff with a birdie on the first playoff hole (Woodmont’s eighth) to make match play.

In addition to Mistry, Katherine Zhu, Auston Kim, Therese Warner, Gurleen Kaur and Haylin Harris emerged from the playoff.

**What's Next**

The Round of 64 is scheduled to begin at 9:50 a.m. EDT on Thursday, with Golf Channel broadcasting live from 4-7 p.m. EDT.

Due to Round 2 of stroke play being postponed on Tuesday, the Rounds of 32 and 16 will be played on Friday, and both the quarterfinals and semifinals are scheduled for Saturday. The 36-hole championship match will take place on Sunday.

**Notable**

* Mistry is the first player to shoot a round of 81 or higher and advance to match play since Kristen Park in 2008. She started the day tied for 124th place of 132 players.
* For the second consecutive year, Ruffels earned the No. 6 seed in match play.
* Brinker made just two bogeys over 36 holes, the fewest of any competitor.
* 2019 U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur runner-up Talia Campbell (No. 48) is the lone mid-amateur (age 25 and older) to advance to match play. Lauren Greenlief was eliminated on the second hole of the playoff.
* Three USGA champions advanced to match play – Ruffels (2019 U.S. Women’s Amateur), Lei Ye (2019 U.S. Girls’ Junior) and Kaitlyn Papp (2016 U.S. Women’s Amateur Four-Ball).
* The lone Maryland player in the field, Aneka Seumanutafa, of Emmitsburg, shot rounds of 71-77 to earn the No. 36 seed.
* The oldest player in the field, Ellen Port, failed to advance to match play in her 23rd U.S. Women’s Amateur. The 58-year-old shot rounds of 75-79 to miss the playoff by four strokes.
* Of the players who advanced to match play: California leads all states with eight and Texas is next with six
* Stanford and USC lead colleges represented, with four players apiece
* 20 of the 64 also made the Round of 64 in the 2019 U.S. Women’s Amateur
* At 186 yards, the par-3 sixth hole played 45 yards longer on Wednesday, leading to a rise in scoring average from 2.99 in Round 1 to 3.30 in Round 2.
* Nos. 2-5 played as four of the five easiest holes on Wednesday. The par-5 third and fifth holes were the only two holes to play under par in Round 2.
* The 15 playoff competitors ties for the second-largest number in the last 30 years.

**Quotable**

“I slept in super late. I ate some food. I took another nap. I ate some more food. That's about how it went. It was pretty nice.” – **Rachel Heck**, on what she did on Tuesday when play was postponed due to Hurricane Isaias

“I actually had two finals. I'm taking two summer school classes. It worked out perfect that it was a day off because I could focus on my finals.” – **Gabriela Ruffels**, on how she spent her day away from the course

“With everything going on, I did not think that they were going to hold the event. I didn't think that any sporting events were going to come back until next year. But once I found out, I was super excited and super happy to be back here and try and get it again.” – **Ruffels**, on the opportunity to defend her title

“My mom doesn't like to fly, so they drive everywhere. Having an RV doesn't make it too bad. They camped in Asheville, N.C., for two or three days and rented a Harley Davidson and drove on the Blue Ridge Parkway.” – **Kennedy Swann**, on her parents driving their RV more than 2,000 miles from Austin, Texas, to Woodmont

“I've played in a handful of match-play events. Last summer I actually finished runner-up at the Carolinas Match Play, which definitely gave me a great experience, just getting that match play under my belt and just knowing what it's like to make a run at it.” – **Riley Smyth**, on the match-play format

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