**Medalist Heck, Defending Champ Ruffels Among Winners At Woodmont**

By Mike Trostel, USGA

**WHAT HAPPENED**

Medalist Rachel Heck won the first four holes against Therese Warner, then hung on in a rollercoaster match that set the tone on a day when many of the top seeds were threatened, but advanced to the Round of 32 in the U.S. Women’s Amateur Championship.

The No. 1 seed in the Women’s Amateur had lost in the Round of 64 in four of the past six years, but Heck, 18, of Memphis, Tenn., seemed to dismiss any thoughts of an upset in the early going. She remained 4 up through 11 holes, but Warner won the 12th and 14th, then drained a 50-foot birdie putt on the 17th to extend the match to the final hole.

“Neither of us gave anything away, I just got off to a hot start,” said Heck, who sank birdie putts of 20 feet and 35 feet on the first two holes. “I expected her to make a run and come back, which of course she did. We both had a lot of fun out there. It was a crazy match.”

In Heck’s 2-up victory, there were 11 winning birdies (with typical match-play concessions) and the players halved just four of the 18 holes at Woodmont Country Club.

Defending champion Gabriela Ruffels was 1 down through eight holes, but surged back by winning five of the next seven holes in a 3-and-2 win over Rajal Mistry.

“It was a little bit of a shaky start,” said Ruffels, 20, of Australia. “It took me a while to kind of get into it, but I was really happy with the way I finished.”

The most dominant performance of the day belonged to Zoe Antoinette Campos, 17, of Valencia, Calif., who won nine of her 13 holes in a 7-and-5 victory over Pimnipa Panthong. Other convincing wins wre turned in by Kaleigh Telfer, 22, of South Africa, who birdied eight of her first 11 holes to overwhelm Talia Campbell, the only mid-amateur to make it to match play, 6 and 5. Rose Zhang, a Stanford commit from Irvine, Calif., dispatched Anna Morgan, 5 and 3.

Zhang, 16, sank a 30-foot birdie putt to halve the opening hole against Morgan, and never trailed after a conceded eagle on the par-5 third.

“I felt like I played more solidly compared to the previous two days,” said Zhang, who reached the quarterfinals of the 2019 U.S. Girls’ Junior. “I just kept the momentum going and it turned out to be a really smooth round for me.”

Other winners included 2019 U.S. Girls’ Junior champion Lei Ye, first-round co-leaders Rachel Kuehn and Riley Smyth, and Courtney Dow, who rallied from 4 down to beat Catherine Park in 20 holes.

**WHAT'S NEXT**

The Round of 32 is scheduled to begin at 7 a.m. EDT on Friday, with the Round of 16 to follow at 12:45 p.m. EDT. Live coverage on Golf Channel begins at 1 p.m. EDT.

The quarterfinal and semifinal rounds will be played on Saturday and the 36-hole championship match will take place on Sunday.

**NOTABLE**

* Kuehn is attempting to become the first player to win the North & South Women’s Amateur, the LNGA Amateur and the U.S. Women’s Amateur in the same year.
* Phoebe Brinker made 17 consecutive pars in her 2-and-1 victory over Auston Kim.
* All six players who advanced to match play from the playoff lost in the first round.
* Amari Avery won four of the final five holes in her match against Michaela Morard, including an eagle on the 397-yard, par-4 14th, where she holed an 8-iron from 155 yards for eagle.
* Alyaa Abdulghany was the only player who did not lose a hole in the Round of 64.
* Two USGA champions remain in the Round of 32 – Ruffels (2019 U.S. Women’s Amateur) and Ye (2019 U.S. Girls’ Junior).
* The lone Maryland player in the field, Aneka Seumanutafa, of Emmitsburg, was downed by Ellie Slama, 3 and 1.
* Avery (16) is the youngest player remaining, while Teresa Toscano Borrero (23) is the oldest.
* Four colleges – Auburn, Stanford, USC and Wake Forest – have two players remaining in the field. Additionally, Zhang is a 2021 commit to Stanford.
* Six of the players in this year’s Round of 32 also reached the second-round of match play in last year’s U.S. Women’s Amateur: Tyler Akabane, Lauren Beaudreau, Hailey Borja, Brooke Matthews, Megan Schofill and Ruffels.

**QUOTABLE**

* “I've never made it past the round of 64, so I'm excited to be here. No matter what round it is, what seed you're playing, you're not going to have an easy match. These are the best amateurs in the world, so I'm just going to play my own game, play the course and have a good time and just enjoy the week.” – **Rachel Heck**, on advancing to the Round of 32
* “I was stuck in between two clubs and we took the shorter club because I'm used to hitting the harder shot. We went with that, it hit the green, we thought it was good, and we watched it and it went in.” – **Amari Avery**, on the 8-iron approach she holed from 155 yards on the 14th hole
* “I played a little later today, so the wind was up a lot more and kind of a different direction than the other days, so I did have to make a couple adjustments with what I hit off of tees.” – **Gabriela Ruffels**, on adjusting to the conditions in the Round of 64
* “She was almost on the same line as my putt, so I got a really good read and able to capitalize. It was just about a ball outside right, and it was a little downhill, so I didn't have to worry about getting it to the hole.” – **Lauren Beaudreau**, on her winning birdie putt on the 19th hole against Marissa Wenzler
* “USGA championships are so close to home for me. The U.S. Women’s Am was an event that I really looked forward to as a junior golfer. If it wasn’t for the U.S. Women’s Am, I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to play these great courses.” – **Michelle Wie West**, 2014 U.S. Women’s Open champion
* “The U.S. Amateur is one of the best events I've ever played. I was on the broadcast yesterday and they asked me what advice I had for Gabi Ruffels since she would be the first person to successfully defend after me. I just said, ‘It's your week. Just believe that it's your week and ride that momentum. Go out and have fun.’ ” – **Danielle Kang**, 2010 and 2011 U.S. Women’s Amateur champion

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