**Hartwiger (69) Leads Way in Round 1 of Stroke Play at Lakewood Club**

By Ron Driscoll, USGA

**What Happened**

Kathy Hartwiger, of Birmingham, Ala., the 2002 U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur champion, shot the low score on Friday, a 3-under-par 69, in the first round of stroke play of the 59th U.S. Senior Women’s Amateur Championship on the Dogwood Course at The Lakewood Club.

Hartwiger, 55, a 10-time Alabama Women’s Amateur champion, has had a successful summer of golf after retiring from her job as a middle-school counselor in May. She won the Alabama Golf Association’s senior women’s four-ball and senior women’s match-play title, and she was runner-up in the state’s senior stroke-play event. She leads Amy Ellertson, of Free Union, Va., who bogeyed her final hole for a 2-under 70, by one stroke. Susan Cohn, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., and Sandra Turbide, of Canada, both shot 1-under 71, the only other under-par rounds on the 5,719-yard, par-72 layout near Mobile Bay.

“I’ve been playing well, but this course is a little long for me,” said Hartwiger, who helped Alabama capture the USGA State Team Championship in 1997. “In stroke play, we all have these squirrelly thoughts in our heads, like we’re going to forget how to play golf. But I made a long putt on the second hole, and the first green I missed (No. 4), I chipped in. That loosens you up a bit.”

Lara Tennant, of Portland, Ore., who won this championship in 2018 and 2019 (it was canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19), opened her defense with an even-par round of 72, and was joined at that score by Corey Weworski, of Carlsbad, Calif., the 2004 U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur champion.

“I just needed to get into a better mindset and get the pace of the greens a little bit better,” said Tennant, 54, who opened with bogeys on four of her first six holes, but rallied to play 3-under golf over her final 12 holes, including birdies on three par 3s. “It’s always a learning experience the first two or three rounds on any golf course, and this course challenges every aspect of your game.”

Seven-time USGA champion Ellen Port, of St. Louis, Mo., and Shelly Stouffer, of Canada, who won the Canadian Senior Women’s title last week in Quebec, both shot 1-over 73 and are tied for seventh place.

“I had a couple of really good up and downs after poor wedge shots,” said Port, who tied for low amateur in the U.S. Senior Women’s Open last month with Martha Leach. Leach opened with a 6-over 78. “I hit the ball really well, but I found the greens tough to read. I was just too tentative with my putts; they break more when you’re not firm with them.”

Sue Wooster, of Australia, the runner-up to Tennant in both of her victories, opened stroke play with a 4-over 76 and is tied for 16th with eight other players.

**What’s Next**

Round 2 of stroke play will be conducted on Saturday, and the low 64 scorers from the the 132-player field will advance to match play. The Round of 64 will take place on Sunday, with two rounds each on Monday and Tuesday, ending with the 18-hole championship match on Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. CDT.

**Notable**

**Carol Semple Thompson** is competing in her second USGA championship of 2021 after taking a hiatus from the game to care for her ailing husband, Richard, who passed away in April following a long bout with Parkinson’s disease. The seven-time USGA champion who is making her 118th USGA start this week was philosophical about her round of 7-over 79, playing with fellow USA Curtis Cup captains Sarah Ingram (77) and Pat Cornett (82). “I played so poorly at Brooklawn [in Fairfield, Conn., for the U.S. Senior Women’s Open, where she missed the cut]. I still had a great time and saw a lot of friends, and that’s what is important, rather that the golf. I wasn’t going to be competitive, anyway, and I’m not sure if I really like competition anymore; I have to kind of figure that out. My handicap has been going up and I want it to come back down. We had a nice morning, and breaking 80 is a pretty good round for me these days. I’m happy.”

**Ellen Port** is competing in her first USGA event since winning the Senior Met Am, a Metropolitan Amateur Golf Association event with an all-male field on Aug. 25 in her hometown of St. Louis, Mo. “It was really satisfying, just to stay in the moment and hit really good shots and win in a playoff. Curt Rohe [the association director] wrote the nicest Facebook post about it; he’s been around a lot of golf and he was so kind with his words, it meant a lot. I got a kick out all of the tweets from people I didn’t know. The funniest one was ‘Ellen Port will steal your lunch money.’ I thought, oh my god, is that what people think? It was so funny.”

**Kathy Hartwiger**’s 69 tied the seventh-lowest round in championship history. The current format dates to 1997; the championship was a 54-hole, stroke-play only event from 1962-1996. The record score of 67 is shared by Toni Wiesner, at Golden Horseshoe Golf Club in Williamsburg, Va., in 1998, and by Betty Probasco, at Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C., in 1991. Four players, including Wiesner, have shot 68.

**Quotable**

“The biggest blessing is to have my father and my mom here. My sister [Cappy Mack] is also playing, and my nephew is here caddieing for her. To have everyone here is the best thing. The score doesn’t really matter. It’s a family affair this week.” – **Lara Tennant**, whose father, George Mack Sr., is again caddieing for her after being on the bag for her two titles

“It’s a wonderful course that plays longer than the yardage. Typically, on a 330-yard hole, I’m 100 yards out, but not here. I’m 115 or 120, often into the wind, and some of the greens are elevated. Some of them, like No. 18, also run away from you. It’s a great test and I’m still learning it.” – **Brenda Pictor**, of Marietta, Ga., who opened with a 4-over 76

“It was a great day; I didn’t hit it especially well, but I got it up and down all day. I made it about as good as it could have been. I love the golf course. I’m not a long hitter so I have to manage the course a little differently than the bigger hitters.” – **Susan Cohn**, who opened with a round of 1-under 71

“The stars have to be aligned to get through a week of match play. You don’t have time to let up, can’t afford to make a mistake for a second. The last two finals [which featured both Lara Tennant and Sue Wooster], those two don’t let up for a second.” – **Cohn**, the runner-up in this championship in 2013

“I made a lot of putts, played smart and was always on the right side of the green. I’d love to say it was my brilliant play, but it was a lot of luck and a little good strategy. I love the course. It suits me, at least today.” – **Amy Ellertson**, after her 2-under-par 70

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