**Two-Time Champion Tennant Leads Top Seeds into Round of 32**

By Ron Driscoll, USGA

Two-time defending champion Lara Tennant, of Portland, Ore., the No. 1 seed in match play, led a parade of top-seeded players who advanced to the Round of 32 with victories on Sunday in the 59th U.S. Senior Women’s Amateur Championship at The Lakewood Club.

Tennant, 54, the stroke-play co-medalist who is trying to win a third consecutive championship after titles in 2018 and 2019, battled past No. 64 seed Tina Barker, 2 and 1. Barker earned her spot in the bracket in a three-hole playoff that ended Sunday morning. The match was tied through 14 holes, but Tennant edged ahead on No. 15 and closed out Barker with a birdie on the par-3 17th hole.

“I’m very aware that there’s never an easy match when you’re playing in a USGA event,” said Tennant, who has now won 13 consecutive matches over three championships, since she lost in the Round of 64 as the No. 1 seed in 2017 at her home course, Waverley Country Club. “You have to be resilient and keep your head in the game, and that’s what I did. At this point a win is a win and it doesn’t matter the margin.”

Thirteen of the top 16 seeds advanced, but Sue Wooster, of Australia, the runner-up in each of the past two championships to Tennant, was one of three eliminated on Sunday. Louella Kanew, of Palm Beach, Fla., the No. 50 seed, defeated Wooster, 3 and 2. Two single-digit seeds were ousted: No. 6 Amy Ellertson, of Free Union, Va. (4 and 2 to Tara Fleming, of Jensen Beach, Fla.), and No. 9 Laura Coble, of Augusta, Ga. (1 up to Sue Curtin, of Westwood, Mass.).

Co-medalist and No. 2 seed Gigi Higgins, of Cape Coral, Fla., earned a 4-and-3 win over Jennifer Hoyt, of Horseshoe Bay, Texas, while No. 3 Ellen Port, of St. Louis, Mo., a seven-time USGA champion, defeated Angie Whitley Coleman, of Wilmington, Del., 5 and 4. No. 4 Susan Cohn, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., also advanced, 5 and 4, over Maria De Orueta, of Spain.

The three players from Alabama who advanced to match play all moved on to the Round of 32. Susan West, of Tuscaloosa, a four-time state player of the year and the No. 24 seed, edged Lisa McGill, 1 up; while No. 5 seed Kathy Hartwiger and No. 7 seed Patricia Earhart, both of Birmingham, each earned 3-and-2 victories. Hartwiger, the 2002 U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur champion, topped 2010 U.S. Senior Women’s Amateur champion Mina Hardin, of Mexico, while Earhart ousted Kelly Morris, of Franklin, Tenn.

**What’s Next**

The Round of 32 and Round of 16 will be contested on Monday, starting at 7:30 a.m. CDT and 1:30 p.m. CDT, respectively. After the quarterfinals and semifinals on Tuesday, the 18-hole championship match is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Spectators are welcome to attend and admission is free.

**Notable**

**Sarah Ingram**, of Nashville, Tenn., a three-time U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur champion and captain of the 2021 and 2022 USA Curtis Cup Teams, posted a 4-and-3 victory over Patty Moore, of Pinehurst, N.C. Ingram, 55, who gave up the game for 22 years due to rheumatoid arthritis, was inspired to return to competitive golf after co-chairing the 2018 U.S. Women’s Amateur at her home course, the Golf Club of Tennessee. “Hosting that championship is the reason I’m playing at this point in time,” said Ingram. “I got inspired by watching those girls play, being around them, trying to channel some of the things that they do.” Ingram advanced to the Round of 16 in this championship in 2019 at Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Country Club, and won the inaugural Ladies National Golf Association in April, in Anthem, Ariz. “I’m learning how to play again and hit the shots I that I know I can hit,” said Ingram. “The brain is a muscle just like anything else; you have to build up your confidence and get stronger mentally. I love match play. At the last Senior Women’s Amateur, I felt like if I could just get to match play, I’d feel a little more comfortable.”

**Lara Tennant** will square off in the Round of 32 in the first match at 7:30 a.m. against another fellow champion, **Judith Kyrinis** of Canada. Kyrinis won in 2017 and is the No. 33 seed. The two were paired in stroke play, along with three-time past champion **Ellen Port**. “When your tee times are right near each other, you know that’s who you’re gonna get,” said Kyrinis, 57, a member of the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame. “Lara is very solid, she doesn’t miss much, so it’s going to be a tough one. It will be a nice, friendly, but highly competitive match.”

**Tina Barker**, of Fairfield, Calif., who lost to Tennant in the Round of 64, is a longtime student of **Shirley Spork**, 94, one of the founders of the LPGA. Barker has also caddied for legends **Louise Suggs** and **Althea Gibson**. Barker, 62, a retired air-traffic controller, will attend next month’s Founders Cup LPGA tournament with Spork at Mountain Ridge Country Club in West Caldwell, N.J.

**Marianne Springer**, of Wellington, Fla., was eliminated in the Round of 64, 3 and 1, by No. 8 seed **Sally Krueger** on Sunday. The 77-year-old Springer was the oldest player in the 132-player field. This was Springer’s fifth U.S. Senior Women’s Amateur and her first since 2010.

**Quotable**

“I had a rough stretch on the first four holes [of stroke play on Saturday], and I said, you know what, let’s start playing some golf, and I finally started to do that. I played 1 under from there on and kind of built on that today. I made a lot of quality shots.” – **Judith Kyrinis**, the 2017 champion, who won her Round-of-64 match on Sunday, 6 and 5, over **Brenda Pictor**

“Golf has become good therapy for me. It’s nice to be outside walking and taking a break from grief or whatever else you’re dealing with. I was very nervous before I started the week, but I stopped and told myself it’s so awesome to be here, stop worrying about it.” – **Kathy Hartwiger**, 55, of Birmingham, Ala., who lost her mother, Ginger, to lung cancer last November at age 77

“I dreaded turning 40, but I was excited to turn 50, because now I can compete with people my own age. It’s been my goal for the past two years just to get here. This is my 21st USGA event and my dad [Wade Welch] has been on the bag for most of them. He caddied for my mother [Jane] in this same event in 2000 and 2006 at Sea Island, Ga.” – **Tracy Welch**, of Winchester, Mass., who turned 50 in August and won her debut match, 3 and 2, over **Itsuko Moridaira**, of Japan

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