**Schroeder-Shoemaker Soar into Semifinals in Puerto Rico**

By David Shefter, USGA

**What Happened**

As individuals, Kaitlyn Schroeder and Bailey Shoemaker have advanced to the quarterfinals of a USGA championship, accomplishing the feat last July at the U.S. Girls’ Junior. As teammates they have now gone one step farther, and perhaps they will be hoisting a trophy late Sunday afternoon.

The 17-year-olds – Schroeder from Jacksonville, Fla., and Shoemaker from Dade City, Fla. – played the equivalent of 15-under-par golf (with usual concessions) over 32 holes on Saturday in winning a pair of matches to reach the semifinals of the 7th U.S. Women’s Amateur Four-Ball Championship at Grand Reserve Golf Club in Puerto Rico.

Schroeder and Shoemaker, who have committed to attend the University of Alabama and the University of Southern California, respectively, next year, eliminated co-medalists and top seeds Chloe Kovelesky, 15, of Boca Raton, Fla., and Yana Wilson, 15, of Henderson, Nev., 3 and 2, in the Round of 16, and then ousted Floridians Kendall Griffin, 23, of Sebring, and Elle Nachmann, 18, of Boca Raton, by the same margin in the afternoon quarterfinals.

“It definitely is a confidence booster, knowing we just defeated two great teams and knowing we are playing well,” said Schroeder, who was on last year’s USA Junior Solheim Cup Team. “And if we can keep playing like this, maybe we can go all the way.”

Joining Schroeder and Shoemaker in the final four are Texans Amelia Guo, 16, of Seabrook, and Grace Jin, 17, of San Antonio; Georgians Thienna Huynh, 18, of Lilburn, and Sara Im, 17, of Duluth; and New Albany (Ohio) High School teammates Kary Hollenbaugh, 17, and Anna Ritter, 18.

Griffin, a University of Louisville fifth-year grad transfer from LSU who was coming off a tie for third in last week’s Atlantic Coast Conference Championship, and Nachmann, a 4.0 student in the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, were riding momentum after taking out 2021 semifinalists Gianna Clemente and Avery Zweig in the Round of 16 on Saturday morning, shooting 7 under in a 3-and-2 triumph. But even playing 4-under golf in the afternoon wasn’t good enough to take out their younger and equally as talented opponents.

“Being able to score that low on a course like this with the wind like this and the conditions is unreal,” said Shoemaker, a three-time New York State Girls’ Junior champion. “Of course, we want to win, but we're rooting for them, and seeing them make all those birdies is fun. But it's fun when we do it, too.”

Jin, the 2020 South Texas PGA Prestige Tour’s player of the year who is headed to Sam Houston State in the fall, and Guo, rallied from 2 down with two to play with birdies on No. 17 (9 feet) and 18 (tap-in) to defeat Virginia teens Sydney Hackett, of Ashburn, and 2021 USA Today/Golfweek Female High School Golfer of the Year Melanie Walker, of Burke, in 19 holes. Hackett, a Western Kentucky signee, had a chance to win the match on the par-5 18th hole but missed a 3-foot birdie putt. A par on the 19th hole was good enough for Jin and Guo to advance, as their opponents both missed short putts to extend.

Huynh, a lefty who has signed to play at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas this fall, and Im, a high school junior who won the 2020 Georgia Women’s Amateur, never trailed in defeating University of Kentucky teammates Laney Frye, 19, of Nicholasville, Ky., and Maria Villanueva, 21, of Spain, 1 up. Birdies on Nos. 3 and 4 put the Georgians 2 up, and the two Wildcats, despite taking the Georgians the distance, never got closer than 1 down the rest of the match.

“I'm tired,” said Huynh, who went 17 holes on Saturday morning to win the sides Round-of-16 match against Canadians Katie Cranston and Nicole Gal, 3 and 1. “We played 35 holes. But both the [opponents] that we played gave us a really good run. I mean, it was a lot of back and forth.”

Frye and Villanueva were coming off a tight 1-up win over co-medalists and No. 2 seeds Leigh Chien, of Irvine, Calif., and Anna Huang, of Canada, in the Round of 16 on Saturday morning.

After Hollenbaugh and Ritter rallied for a 1-up win in the Round of 16 over 24-year-old twins Jessica and Sarah Spicer, of Bahama, N.C., they made five birdies over the first eight holes to take a commanding 6-up lead in the quarters against No. 3 seeds Yilin (Angela) Liu, 16, of Irvine, Calif., and Charissa Shang, 18, of Calabasas, Calif. The Californians fought back with wins on Nos. 9, 10 and 14, but Hollenbaugh and Ritter managed to tie the next two holes to advance as dusk settled over the Caribbean island.

**What’s Next**

The semifinal matches will go off at 7 a.m. and 7:15 a.m. on Sunday, followed by the 18-hole championship match, which is scheduled for 12:30 p.m.

**Notable**

The four quarterfinal losers, provided the side remains intact, are exempt from qualifying into the 2023 U.S. Women’s Amateur Four-Ball Championship, which is scheduled to be played May 13-17 at The Home Course in DuPont, Wash.

Five extra-hole matches have now been played, tying the championship mark that was established in 2019 at Timuquana Country Club in Jacksonville, Fla.

Semifinalist **Sara Im** won the Drive, Chip & Putt title in the Girls 12-13 division in 2018. Semifinalist **Bailey Shoemaker** tied for second in that same age-group category. Earlier this month, Shoemaker competed in the Augusta National Women’s Amateur.

Im’s partner, **Thienna Huynh**, is vying to become the second left-hander to win this championship, following **Erica Shepherd** in 2019.

**Kaitlyn Schroeder’s** father, Scott, is the head men’s golf coach at the University of North Florida.

New Albany (Ohio) High School teammates and semifinalists **Kary Hollenbaugh** and **Anna Ritter** are no strangers to big-time pressure. Last fall, they helped their team rally from a six-stroke deficit after Round 1 to win its fourth consecutive OHSAA Division 1 state team title. Ritter carded a final-round 68 and Hollenbaugh contributed a 74. Ritter’s father, Richard, is the team’s coach, while Hollenbaugh’s dad, Paul, is a PGA professional who is the director of golf at New Albany C.C. New Albany is 15 miles northeast of Columbus. Ritter has signed to play for the University of Illinois, while Hollenbaugh is headed to Ohio State this fall.

The elimination of the two co-medalists in the Round of 16 meant that only one side who has been a medalist/co-medalist since the event’s inception in 2015 has walked away with the title (former Furman standouts **Alice Chen** and **Taylor Totland** in 2017).

Both mid-amateur sides that won opening-round matches saw their runs end in the Round of 16 on Saturday morning. Four-time U.S. Mid-Amateur champion **Meghan Stasi** and **Dawn Woodard**, the only duo to compete in all seven championships, lost to Virginia teens **Sydney Hackett** and **Melanie Walker**, while 2017 U.S. Women’s Mid-Am champ **Kelsey Chugg** and two-time champion **Julia Potter-Bobb** (2013, ’16) were beaten by Southern Californians **Yilin (Angela) Liu** and Harvard signee **Charissa Shang**, 3 and 2.

**Quotable**

“Match play is very tiring both physically and mentally, so the fact that we were able to persist through the first 18 [in the Round of 16] and then 19 on this [quarterfinal] match was just great. – **Grace Jin,** on grinding through two victories with partner **Amelia Guo**

“Both of our original partners are off at college. It was kind of a mutual thing we found each other, but we're just really good friends. We played a couple team events like Junior Solheim [Cup] and Wyndham Cup, and just practice for that really helped us.” – **Bailey Shoemaker,** on how she wound up partnering with **Kaitlyn Schroeder** after the two had previously played in this event with other partners

“It was just to see who could stand the longest. Honestly, I think it was just having confidence. Like this morning, I don't know for you, [Sara], but I was really on edge. I was like shaking. We were 4-up [in the quarterfinals], and I was just shaking. I was like, I don't feel good about this. Like, I do not feel good. But I guess that you need a little bit of that [nervous feeling] to do well.” – **Thienna Huynh,** on her emotions after winning two tough matches with partner **Sara Im**

“We were really disappointed that we didn't get to play in the one [in 2020], but we're like, this is our chance, so we wanted to show everyone what we've got.” – **Kary Hollenbaugh,** on finally getting the chance to play in this event with partner **Anna Ritter** after COVID-19 canceled the championship in 2020

“I think for me it's just cool to have my partner as one of my closest friends. I think it's easier because we know each other so well so we're able to calm each other down, and that's an advantage for us honestly. This is actually my first USGA event, so just to be able to go this far with her is really, really cool.” – **Ritter,** on reaching the semifinals with her high school teammate **Hollenbaugh**

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