

Cold weather fails to cool off Pano

By Steve Waters
Special to The Post

FORT LAUDERDALE
-- Despite a frigid start to Monday's stroke-play qualifier in the 87th Ione D. Jones/Doherty Women's Amateur Championship, it didn't take long for Alexa Pano to warm up and continue her hot play of the last five weeks.

Temperatures were in the high 40s Monday morning when the players in the Amateur division teed off at Coral Ridge Country Club. Pano, 14, of Lake Worth, led all qualifiers with a 1-over-par 73.

"I missed a lot of putts, but I'm OK with it. My ball-striking was pretty good today," said Pano, who went off at 8:20 a.m. "It was really cold in the morning. Once I got loose, I felt pretty solid.

"The fairways here are really great. It's one of the better courses I've played in a while, so it's been really nice."

Pano came into the tournament off a second-place finish out of 79 players, most of them college golfers, in the Women's South Atlantic Amateur Golf Championship. Playing Wednesday through Saturday, she shot a four-round total of 3-over-par 291 at Oceanside Country Club in Ormond Beach.

Earlier this month, Pano won the girls' 16-18 division of the Junior Honda Classic, firing rounds of 70-77 on the Champion course at PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens to win by eight shots. And in



Pano

December she won the Women's Dixie Amateur by one shot with a 5-under 283

at Woodlands Country Club in Tamarac.

The 2017 Doherty champion, who lost in the championship match to Meghan Stasi last year, Pano earned a bye for today's first round of match play, along with the top-seeded Stasi, of Oakland Park. Third-seeded Elle Nachmann of Boca Raton and No. 4 Courtney McKim of Raleigh, N.C., also received byes after posting 75s.

Melissa Loh of Dallas and Marie Arnoux of Miami also shot 75, but because they finished after Nachmann and McKim, they will play today. Loh faces Shirley Vaughan of Canton, Ohio, who shot 88. Arnoux meets Diane Booth of Las Vegas, who shot 84.

In the other two Amateur matches, No. 7 Jamie Freedman of Miami Beach, who shot 78, faces No. 10 Amy Kennedy of Naples (83). No. 8 Marisa Messina of Plantation (79) plays 10th-seeded Dana Williams of Boca Raton (80).

Tama Caldabaugh of Ponte Vedra Beach, Gigi Higgins of Cape Coral and Mimi Hoffman of Springfield, Va., each shot 76 to take the second, third and fourth seeds, respectively, in the Senior Championship division behind defending champ and top seed Lisa Schlesinger of Fort Myers.