

# Doherty competitors fight through wind in stroke-play qualifier

By Staff and event reports

Strong winds and challenging greens tested the golfers who played in Monday's 18-hole stroke-play qualifier for the 86th Ione D. Jones/Doherty Women's Amateur Championship in Fort Lauderdale.

Every player, though, gets to play today in the first round of match play at Coral Ridge Country Club. The first players tee off at 8 a.m. in a Senior Third Flight match.

"We were a couple of beauty queens out there today," joked former Florida Women's Amateur of the Year Tara Joy-Connelly of North Palm Beach, who played with 2012 Doherty champion Meghan Stasi of Oakland Park.

The good friends, who often compete together in team events, both shot 10-over-par 83s on the 6,251-yard layout.

"It was windy, tough conditions, and we weren't getting any roll on the ball in the fairway, so the course played very long," said Stasi, who was eight over on the front nine, in part, she said, because she mis-clubbed and short-sided herself several times.

"It was just a practice round for me because we're being seeded. Match play's [today] and I'm excited for match play."

Connelly is seeded 10th and Stasi 11th in the 13-player Amateur division. Defending champion Alexa Pano is the top seed and didn't have to qualify, but she played to get a feel for her game and the classic Robert Trent Jones course.

"I got to work on some

stuff," said Pano, 13, of Lake Worth. "I learned the speed of the greens. They break a lot more than I'm used to."

Pano has a bye for today's match play, as does No. 2 seed Haeley Wotnosky of Wake Forest, N.C., who led the Amateur division with a 76 that included four birdies. Third-seeded Georgia Oboh of Riviera Beach got the other bye with a 77.

No. 4 seed Marie Arnoux of Miami also shot 77 and she will play 13th-seeded Karen Ford of Oak Brook, Ill., starting at 11:28 a.m.

Arnoux played with 14-year-old Makenna Rodriguez of Delray Beach, who is competing in the Doherty for the first time. A ninth-grader at American Heritage School in Delray, where she plays on the golf team, Rodriguez shot an 82 and is seeded ninth.

"My strengths are my approach shots and my putting," said Rodriguez, whose round was highlighted by a birdie on the 145-yard, par-3 12th hole after she hit a hybrid to eight inches. "I love hitting my hybrids."

Sylvie Van Molle lives in France and also is playing in the Doherty for the first time. One of 48 golfers 50-and-over, she was the Senior division medalist with a 75 that included three birdies.

Van Molle is the No. 2 seed in the Senior division, behind defending champ Lisa Schlesinger of Fort Myers, who, like Pano, played Monday to get a feel for the greens.

Terrill Samuel of Toronto, who lost in the finals to Schlesinger last year, is seeded third after a 76.