

Hiestand stuns 2023 runner-up, 2034 Senior medalist Kyrinis in 19 holes

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By Gary Curreri

Naples' Mary Jane Hiestand skipped the opening dinner on Monday night to watch the College Football National Championship game between Michigan and Washington at nearby Umberto's Italian restaurant.

Hiestand, 65, who won the Ione D. Jones/Doherty Senior Women's Amateur Championship in 2011, attended Michigan before transferring to the University of Florida. On Tuesday, was sporting a Michigan hat, a Michigan water thermos, a matching watch, and a broad smile during the first round of match play.

Hiestand celebrated Michigan's 34-13 victory in style by defeating 2020 champion Judith Kyrinis, 1-up (19 holes) in blustery conditions at Coral Ridge Country Club. Kyrinis found the trees on the 19th making bogey, while Hiestand made par in the 38th edition of the event.

"It's a very good way to celebrate a Michigan win," grinned Hiestand, who admittedly played poorly in qualifying (12-over, 84) and knew her match against Kyrinis, who is longer off the tee, would be a difficult one.

"I just held my ground and putted really good, and she putted quite poorly for her unfortunately," Hiestand added. "There were a few putts that I should have made, but didn't. I played well enough to win. She made like a 30-footer on 18 to tie the hole but found the trees on the extra hole."

Kyrinis, who took medalist honors on Monday, also lost in the finals last year to Shelly Haywood, 1-up (20 holes).

"I was 2-over today," said Kyrinis, who struggled with her putting as she three-putted 3, 4, 6, 10 and the 14th holes. "I hit the ball well and played great, but I had 5 three-putts on those greens. I really struggled with the speed of the greens and judging the wind. Five 3-putts don't make you win too many matches and M.J. played well. She putted well and got it up and down from everywhere.

"I told myself to be patient because I was hitting the ball really well," said Kyrinis, of Thornhill, Canada. "I was 2-down after 10...I just couldn't find the bottom of the cup. I chipped away and got it back to even. I made a 30-footer on 18 to halve

the hole. On 19, it was probably the first fairway I missed today. There was a gust of wind in my backswing, and I got a little unlucky and it went behind a tree.”

Haywood (Laguna Woods, CA) is looking to become the first back-to-back winner since Lisa Schlesinger won in 2017-2019. She won her match 5&4 over Judy Penman (Pinehurst, NC) on Tuesday.

Haywood, who will face Sarah Ingram (Nashville, Tenn.) who won her first-round match 6&5 over Dianne Chancellor (Naples). Haywood is the two-time reigning California Senior Women’s Player of the Year.

“I started off really good,” said Haywood, who won the California Senior Amateur championship in October. “I just knew to hit greens. I just wanted to hit as many greens as I could. I did a pretty good job of that on the front. I made one mistake on eight, and we made the turn at 10, and I started to hit the ball really well.

“I didn’t really make any birdie putts today, but because of the wind you are not going to hit every green out there,” she added. “I hit some really good shots on 5 and 6. It was a three-club wind.”

Haywood said the wind was the great equalizer. She said the players know that anything can happen with 30 to 40-mph gusts.

“Weird things can happen, and anything can happen,” Haywood remarked. “I played really well in the wind because I don’t put a lot of sidespin on the ball. I just tried to hit it straight today and control the ball.”

Birmingham, Alabama native Scarlett Schremmer, the Amateur medalist on Monday, won a difficult match on Tuesday, 2&1 over Dawn Woodard (Greer, SC) in the 91st annual Ione D. Jones/Doherty Women’s Amateur Championship. Schremmer, whose mom, Patricia Ehrhart, was 3-up after 15, but lost 16 and hung on to win.

Woodard is a six-time South Carolina Amateur Champion and three-time USGA Women’s Mid-Am medalist.

“I honestly had a pretty tough match today,” Schremmer said. “I knew that the weather conditions were going to be less than ideal today (Tuesday). We just went back and forth all day and it was a little exhausting towards the end of the day when the wind started to pick up. I just wanted to try and stay patient and hit good shots.”

Schremmer will face Delray Beach's Gabriela Albert in the quarterfinals. Albert topped Canice Screene (Croyden, Surrey) 1-up.

"It is definitely safe to say that I didn't have my 'A' game today, but I am confident if I keep doing what I am doing and continue taking it one shot at a time, I'll continue to play more good golf," she continued. "I was pretty much up all day, but I was scratching. I made some pretty good putts to make par even or save bogies, so I am grateful for that."

Defending Doherty Amateur champion Morgan Miller called her 6&5 win over West Palm Beach's Staci Pla "a difficult one."

"It was a tough match," said Miller, 19, a sophomore at the University of Colorado. "I was just focused on making pars out there and not making any bad mistakes. Birdies came today, which they didn't yesterday, which was good. You always need that in match play."

"I was just focused on hitting greens today," she added. "I wanted to 2-putt or make the putt from there. They are all tough matches. I was just consistent today. I only bogeyed two holes, had like four birdies and the rest were pars. I didn't go extremely low, that's why I think it was a tough match. It felt exaggerated out there because of the wind."

Miller jumped out to a 3-up lead after four holes, and 5-up through seven and kept the pressure on

"I went back to 3-up through 10," Miller said. "I came out hot and just wanted to make her make birdies almost to win the hole. I played a lot better today. I shaved the ball today. I struck it better and putted it better. Overall, I played better today in harder conditions."

"I feel so good," Miller said. "It's match play, so you have to hit it good and putt well because anything can happen."

Miller will take on the University of Florida sophomore Maisie Filler (West Palm Beach), a 7&6 winner over Peyton Constabile (Ayr, ON) in Wednesday's quarters.

Two-time Doherty champion Meghan Stasi fell to Miami's Sydney Grimes, 2-up. Stasi, who won in 2012 and 2018, is also the 2024 Curtis Cup captain and four-time U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur champion.

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