

Florida Women's Open this weekend



From the Bunker
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Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLA.

Torrential rain, then Hurricane Irma, took away Collier County's first United States Golf Association event last year at Quail Creek Country Club. The U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur had to move to Texas.

Quail Creek has since recovered, is embarking on a huge project, and this week will host a state championship -- the Florida Women's Open, along with the Senior Women's Open. They are Florida State Golf Association events and in their second year. The Women's Open has a purse of \$50,000.

"We are very proud to be working with the Florida State Golf Association," said Don Hunter, the club's chief operating officer. "There is nothing like the feel of an open championship. Mixing the state's elite amateurs and professionals into one field creates an amazing experience.

"The championship will have a positive economic impact for our community, adding over half a million dollars in new revenues. I know the players will enjoy our great community hospitality."

Sandra Changkija and Barb Bunkowsky, the Open and Senior Open champion respectively, are back to defend their titles in the 154-player field that starts play Friday and continues through Sunday. Before the final round, the field will be cut to the low 60 and ties.

New this year is that both tournaments are open to out-of-state residents.

"Our members and staff at Quail Creek have really pulled together on this event," Hunter said. "The players can count on a world-class championship experience. (Superintendent) Kevin Leo and his team will present two excellent golf courses."

Changkija, a former Nova Southeastern golfer, dominated the field at Reunion Resort last year, shooting 17 under, and is on the LPGA Tour. Bunkowsky, a former LPGA Tour winner, won the senior title on the first playoff hole against Carolyn Hill. Both shot 5 over.

Other pros include Charlotta Sorenstam, a former LPGA Tour player who is Annika's sister, and former LPGA player Laurie Rinker, who has two LPGA Tour wins and four Legends Tour victories.

Southwest Florida is well-represented, with perhaps the most recognizable name being three-time LPGA Tour winner Terry-Jo Myers of Fort Myers. Myers hasn't played much other than a handful of Legends Tour events.

Naples' Mary Jane Hiestand, a Hideout Golf Club member who made it to the finals of the U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur Championship -- the one that was supposed to be at Quail Creek. Hiestand won her fourth Women's State Senior Amateur title in April.

Emma Bradley, who recently signed with Baylor after decommitting from Ole Miss, has played in the U.S. Women's Open and the U.S. Women's Amateur. She tied for sixth in the Florida Women's Open last year.

Bonita Springs' Kim Keyer-Scott, who won the Women's State Mid-Amateur title, is in the field. Both Hiestand and Keyer-Scott will be in the senior division, as will Cape Coral amateur Gigi Higgins.

Other players with local ties: Ailsa Clark, Florida Gulf Coast University women's golfer; Annie Garcia, The Quarry; Lexie Flerlage, FGCU recruit; Emma Smyser, Naples; Vasy Montague, High Point women's golfer from Naples; Cathleen Wong, Stoneybrook; Kim Egozi, Estero High and Pelican's Nest; Gabriella Wheeler, Cape Coral; Jennifer Udd, Naples; Sydney Shrader, St. John Neumann grad and current North Florida golfer; Gail



Fort Myers resident Terry-Jo Myers, who won three times on the LPGA Tour, will be playing this weekend in the Florida Women's Open and Senior Women's Open at Quail Creek Country Club in Naples.

MARC BEAUDIN/SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Graham, instructor at Tom Patri Golf Schools at Esplanade and former LPGA Tour winner and Legends Tour player; Jeanne Gibbons, Colonial Country Club; Elizabeth Amendola, Community School of Naples and Grey Oaks; Natalie McNicholas, Calusa Pines; Holly Vaughn, Quail Creek; and Kathie Westlund, San Carlos Golf Club.

Vaughn and Hiestand also just played in the inaugural U.S. Senior Women's Open, both missing the cut.

Bonita Springs' Kimberly Benedict, who has made match play in the last two U.S. Women's Mid-Amateurs, had to withdraw with a pinched nerve.

Drive, Chip and Putt subregional: A number of Southwest Florida juniors are two steps from the finals at Augusta National Golf Club. The subregional is Saturday at Bonita Bay Club.

Leading the way is Naples' Jensi Krampel, the only Southwest Florida player to make the finals at Augusta last year. Krampel finished second in the local qualifier at Vineyards in the Girls 10-II Division.

The top two boys and top two girls from each age division advance to the regional round.

Other locals in the field: Girls 7-9 -- Kinley Mills, Fort Myers; Isabella Michetti, Naples; Eliza Balliet, Naples; Olivia Puskas, Estero; Reilly Kirwin, Naples; Boys 7-9 -- Jack Zejda, Naples; Gabriel Boone, Naples; Brody Billows Austin, Fort Myers; Braden Grable, Cape Coral; Chase Senkarik, Naples; Jayse Beste, Fort Myers; Girls 10-II -- Athena Spiska, Naples; Isabelle Ferraro, Fort Myers; Sophie Sullivan, Marco Island; Sadie Johnson, Fort Myers; Boys 10-II -- Sean Adamczyk, Naples; Jack Ryan Donovan, Ave Maria; Noah Pruss, Sanibel; Charlie Santucci, Fort Myers; Nick Allen, Naples; Girls 12-13 -- Isabella Lauzon, Cape Coral; Caroline Kelly, Cape Coral; Alexis Maciak, Naples; Morgan Franklin, Fort Myers; Jamie Lowry, Fort Myers; Sara Vitasek, Naples; Boys 12-13 -- Michael Bevins, Fort Myers; Aidan MacInnes, Bonita Springs; Keegan McGinn, Bonita Springs; Ryan Miller, Naples; Graham Boone, Naples; Girls 14-15 -- Eliza Kodak, Naples; Alyssa Fritz, Cape Coral; Talia Rodino, Fort Myers; Maggie Platten, Naples; Jordan Knox, Fort Myers; Boys 14-15 -- Ty Kaufman, Naples; Noah Kent, Estero; Tyler Stamerro, Naples; Kevin Kelly, Cape Coral; Logan Eakins, Fort Myers.

State Amateur Match Play: Naples' David Morgan made it to the semifinals, falling to eventual champion Nicholas Gabreleik, 3 and 2. Morgan, a University of Virginia commit, won his quarterfinal match in 20 holes. Morgan won his first-round match 3 and 2, and his second and third both at 1-up.

Naples' Josh Pisarri won his matches 3 and 2, 4 and 3, and 2-up, before falling to Trevor Hulbert, 4 and 3, in the quarterfinals.

Naples' Chad Tracy lost in the first round to Manuel Girona of Davenport, 5 and 4, and Fort Myers' Shane Reynolds lost in the first round, 3 and 1. Fort Myers' Landon Weber

won his first match, 3 and 2, but lost to Christopher Carlin of Plantation, 1-up, in the next round.

State Junior Team Championship: The First Tee of Naples/Collier participated in the tournament at Sandridge Golf Club over the weekend.

The Girls 16-18 team -- Vivian Guite, Kelli Kragh and Sophie Shrader -- finished fourth, shooting 160-161/321. Guite tied for seventh, shooting 77-82/159, and Kragh tied for ninth, shooting 83-79/162. Shrader tied for 17th, shooting 87-84/171.

Stoneybrook Junior Golf also had a team -- Gabby Vetter, Talia Rodino and Claire Sattler -- in the Girls 16-18s that finished sixth, shooting 163-168/331.

The First Tee of Naples/Collier's Boys 13-15 team -- Kody Horton, Willem Jaron and Reilly Wittmer -- finished 10th, shooting 186-181/367. Horton tied for 21st with scores of 89-89/178, and Jaron was 27th (97-92/189), and Wittmer tied for 29th (103-105/208).

The Boys 16-18 team -- Joey Burke, Mason Dozer and Robert Walbert -- finished 10th, shooting 171-168/339. Burke was 23rd with scores of 85-85/170, and Walbert was 24th, shooting 88-83/171. Dozer tied for 31st, shooting 86-93/179.

The Girls 13-15 team -- Chelsea Baker, Jasmine Mendez and Isabella Alvarez -- finished sixth, shooting 205-200/405. Baker was 13th (93-86/179), Mendez was 17th (112-122/234) and Alvarez was 18th (141-114/255).

Women's Southeastern Challenge Matches: Team Florida ended up half a point behind Team Georgia to finish second in the three-state competition at The Amelia Island Club at Long Point that ended July 31.

Bonita Springs' Kim Keyer-Scott, Cape Coral's Gigi Higgins, and Fort Myers' Lisa Schlesinger were on the Florida team.

Keyer-Scott and Tama Caldabaugh of Ponte Vedra won their four-ball match, 2 and 1, against Team Alabama. Higgins and Schlesinger lost their match to Team Georgia, 6 and 5.

Keyer-Scott and Caldabaugh won their foursomes match, 4 and 3, and Higgins and Schlesinger won theirs, 3 and 2, against Team Alabama. Against Team Georgia, both won as well -- Keyer-Scott and Caldabaugh, 5 and 4, and Higgins and Schlesinger, 4 and 3.

In three-ball matches last Tuesday, Keyer-Scott won against Team Alabama, 4 and 3, Schlesinger won 6 and 4, and Higgins won, 5 and 4. Against Team Georgia, Keyer-Scott halved her match, and Schlesinger and Higgins won their matches both at 3 and 2.

US Kids Golf World Championship: The Junior Golf Performance Academy, located at Quail Creek Country Club under Spencer Graham, had a number of juniors play this past weekend in Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Gianna Clemente, whose family lives part of the year in Estero, won her third World Championship, firing 67-63 to win by three shots in the Girls 10 Division. Jack Zejda of Naples tied for 26th in the Boys 7 Division, shooting 39-41-46. Elayna Brown, 6, who is a part-time Naples resident, was 17th in the Girls 7-and-under, shooting 41-42-37. Sydney Young, also a part-time Naples resident, was 42nd in the Girls II Division, shooting 78-77. Berkley Young, also a part-time Naples resident, was 21st in the Girls 8 Division, shooting 40-45-41.

Haley Davis of Naples tied for 74th in the Girls II Division, shooting 80-84. Sara Vitasek of Naples was 101st in the Girls 12 Division with a pair of 88s. Annika Kohoutkova, a part-time Naples resident, shot 81-72 in the Girls II Division. Tommy Pezeshkan of Naples tied for 59th in the Boys 14 Division, shooting 86-79-73. Logan Eakins of Fort Myers was 100th in the Boys 14 Division with scores of 85-76-91. And Alyssa Fritz of Cape Coral was 44th in the Girls 14 Division, shooting 88-92-88.