

SPORTS

'Nice to give my family something to cheer for'

South Korea's Sei Young Kim wins Marathon Classic

SEYOUNG KIM, Ohio, July 15, (AP): Sei Young Kim won the Marathon Classic on Sunday for her second LPGA Tour victory of the season, making five straight birdies in a mid-round burst and shooting a 6-under 65 for a two-stroke victory over Lexi Thompson.

Kim began the birdie run on No. 7 and finished at a tournament-record 22-under 262 at Highland Meadows Golf Club. The 26-year-old South Korean player has nine tour titles, also winning the LPGA MEDITERRANEAN Championship in May in California.

"I really wanted another win, especially this week, because the last two weeks I play really bad," Ki said.

Thompson, a stroke behind Kim entering the day, closed birdie-eagle for a 66.

"She played some amazing golf," Thompson said. "I didn't have my best ball-striking day, but 5 under, finished well. She played amazing. It's very



Sei Young Kim holds the trophy after winning the Marathon LPGA Classic tournament on July 14 at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, Ohio. (AP)

well deserved."

Six shots ahead of Thompson after the birdie run, Kim played the final seven holes in even par, offsetting a birdie on 15 with a bogey on 1. Kim broke the event mark of 263 set by In-Kyung Kim in 2017.

She's focused on winning her first major title, with The Evian Championship and Women's British Open coming up.

"I haven't had a win the major tournament yet," Kim said. "I think I try too much when I play the major tournament. I just play the same as regular tournament, even major. Just let it go. Let it happen."

Stacy Lewis was third at 16 under after a 66. She was born in nearby Toledo.

"It was a lot of fun," Lewis said. "More putts have gone in this week than in the years past. It was nice to give my family something to cheer for."

US Women's Open champion Jeon-geun Lee had a 69 to finish fourth at 14 under.

Jennifer Kupcho tied for fifth at 11 under after a 71, playing alongside Lewis.

"Getting to play with Stacy – and Lexi yesterday – seeing how their ball-striking is and how good their

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iron game is, definitely something to work on and definitely can learn and did learn from their games," Kupcho said.

The former Wake Forest star won the inaugural Augusta National Women's Amateur in April.

Linnea Strom (65), Tiffany Joh (67), Caroline Masson (68) and Pavarisa Yoktuan (69) also were 11 under.

Kupcho earned a spot in the Women's British Open along with Joh, Strom, Yoktuan and Mariajo Uribe.



Dylan Frittelli holds the trophy after winning the John Deere Classic golf tournament on July 14 at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Ill. (AP)

Goosen ends PGA Tour Champions drought

AKRON, Ohio, July 15, (AP): Retief Goosen birdied the final two holes to win the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship on Sunday at Firestone Country Club for his first PGA Tour Champions title.

The 50-year-old Hall of Famer from South Africa broke a tie for the lead with a 15-foot putt on the par-4 17th and made a 10-footer on the par-4 18th for a 2-under 68 and a two-stroke victory over 65-year-old Jay Haas and Tim Petrovic.

"It's been 10 years since I last won a tournament," Goosen said. "The nerves were there, and to have those nerves a little bit again in the last few weeks, you know, you've just got to put yourself in a position all the time to get used to it again and that's what I've done and it finally paid off this week."

Three strokes ahead after opening rounds of 69 and 62, Goosen dropped a stroke behind Scott Parel on Saturday with a 75.

"Played great the first two rounds and then didn't play all that bad yesterday, just let the course get the better of me," Goosen said. "And today it was playing tough again. It was tough to get close, tough to make birdies, but managed to finish with four birdies in the last six holes or seven holes, so it was nice to pull it off."

The two-time US Open champion rebounded from a bogey on the par-4 first with an eagle on the par-5 second, then parred the next eight. He offset a double bogey on the par-4 11th with birdies on the par-3 12th and par-4 13th, but dropped another

stroke on the par-4 14th. Firestone is a longtime PGA Tour venue, hosting the World Golf Championships event and previously the World Series of Golf.

"It's an unbelievable course," Goosen said. "It's a golf course that hitting the fairways is the No. 1 priority, and even if you're on the fairway, sometimes you struggle to get close. It's a great golf course. This week it played tough with the wind blew."

Haas, trying to become the oldest



Retief Goosen, of South Africa, raises the Sam Snead Trophy after winning the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship golf tournament at Firestone Country Club on July 14 in Akron, Ohio. (AP)

winner in tour history, closed with a 67.

"It does not suit me at all," Haas said about Firestone. "But the way it was playing, it was playing pretty fast in the fairways and everything, and if I could keep it in the fairway I had a chance. But Retief's hitting an iron on 17. I'm hitting a driver and that same iron."

Petrovic shot 68.

"I've been struggling," Petrovic said. "Been kind of doing everything mediocre this year. Kind of got back to work this week, kind of went back to basics."

Parel had a 73 to tie for fourth with Kent Jones (71) at 2 under.

"I think I probably will do better next time I'm here," Parel said. "I was probably not as prepared for the course. I probably needed to take a

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club out, put another one in here or there. Really seemed to bite me today more than anything."

Steve Stricker, the first-round leader after a 64, shot a 72 to finish sixth at 1 under. He was coming off a victory two weeks ago in the US Senior Open at Norte Dame, and also won the major Regions Tradition in May.

"Just made too many mistakes again," Stricker said. "Didn't make too many putts when I did have some opportunities, and you've got to have all parts of your game working here. It's a great course. It was set up tough, but a great week."

Frittelli 'clinches' first PGA Tour title in style

Wiesberger wins Scottish Open in playoff over Hebert

SILVIS, Illinois, July 15, (RTRS): South African Dylan Frittelli secured the final spot in the British Open field when he won the John Deere Classic by two strokes in Silvis, Illinois, on Sunday.

Frittelli clinched his first PGA Tour victory in style with a seven-birdie, seven-under-par 64 at TPC Deere Run, after starting the day two strokes off the pace.

He finished at 21-under 263, while American Russell Henley shot a sizzling 61 to vault into second place on 19 under.

Frittelli quickly set his sights on the British Open that starts at Royal Portrush on Thursday.

"Hopefully jump on that (charter) flight tonight and head over to the Open," the bespectacled 29-year-old told CBS television.

"Hopefully I can be calm by the time I get there but I'm sure it's going to be a fun flight." Johannesburg-born Frittelli attended the University of Texas in Austin before turning pro in 2012.

He won twice on the European Tour

in 2017 but this is his first full season on the PGA Tour.

Frittelli started the week ranked 153rd on the tour's points ranking, more concerned with improving his position than winning. Now he has a two-year exemption.

"It's an amazing feeling to know I have some job security," he said. "Perspective is going to change big time. It sets me up to be a little more specific (with my schedule)." Wearing all white clothing on Sunday, in contrast to the traditional black outfit compatriot Gary Player donned throughout his storied career, Frittelli got a great start with birdies at the first three holes and never looked back.

While he eventually won with a degree of comfort, for a while it looked as though Henley had a chance to secure what would have been a stunning victory.

The American teed off trailing overnight leaders Andrew Landry and Cameron Tringale by seven shots, and made 10 birdies to set a target for the rest.

Only Frittelli was up to the challenge.

Landry (69) birdied the final hole for third place on 18-under, while Tringale (73) was never a factor, plunging down the leader-board to equal 16th.

Austrian Bernd Wiesberger made hard work of it but eventually won the Scottish Open when he beat Benjamin Hebert in a playoff in North Berwick.

After sinking a six-foot par clutch putt at the final hole of regulation to force the playoff, Wiesberger clinched victory at the third extra hole with another par at the par-four 18th at the Renaissance Club.

Frenchman Hebert, without a European Tour victory, came close to

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pulling off a stunning upset when he surged from seven strokes behind in the final round, shooting nine-under-par 62.

But his nerves betrayed him in the playoff as he three-putted twice.

After missing a putt from barely four feet that would have won it at the second extra hole, Hebert was wide again from not much longer at the next, which proved the nail in the coffin.

Wiesberger had shot a closing 69 to match Hebert at 22-under 262, two strokes clear of Frenchman Romain Langasque, to force the playoff.

Though Hebert fell short, he got the

consolation prize of a spot in the British Open which starts at Royal Portrush on Thursday.

Wiesberger, already exempt for the final major of the year, exuded a look of relief rather than excitement after holing out from four feet for his sixth victory on the European Tour, and his second of the season.

"It was a long day but somehow I managed," he was quoted as saying on the European Tour website.

"I would have loved to seal it with a couple of pars coming in but sometimes it just tests you. I'm very grateful for how it turned out." The result moved 33-year-old Wiesberger atop the tour's season-long Race to Dubai rankings, and he will jump into the top 50 in the world rankings.

"Being in places where you have no control over what is going to happen next all of last year makes it just a lot sweeter and you appreciate it a lot more," he said.

Englishman Andrew 'Beef' Johnson and Italian Nino Bertasio, who tied for fourth on 19-under, also earned places in the British Open as previously non-exempt players.

Rory McIlroy closed out a quiet week with a 69 that left him equal 34th, nine strokes off the pace.

Though he never quite fired on all cylinders, the Northern Irishman broke 70 in every round in a solid tune-up for Portrush.



South Africa's Christiaan Bezuidenhour on the 7th green during day four of the Scottish Open at The Renaissance Club in North Berwick, Scotland on July 14. (AP)

McIlroy hopes to attack Royal Portrush with driver

Molinari paired with Scott and DeChambeau for Open defence

LONDON, July 15, (RTRS): Francesco Molinari said this year's Open will be "extra special" as he prepares to try and defend the Claret Jug at Royal Portrush, the first time the tournament has been played on Northern Irish soil for 68 years.

Molinari, who emerged from a thrilling final day at Carnoustie a year ago to become the first Italian to win a major, will begin his quest alongside American Bryson DeChambeau and Australian Adam Scott.

"Any week you defend it's special, but this week will be extra special," he said at his news conference on Monday after the pairings for the first two days were announced.

"I just want to enjoy it as much as possible and like I did at the Ryder Cup, I want to soak in the atmosphere."

It will also be a special week for Northern Ireland's contingent, including Darren Clarke and Rory McIlroy.

Clarke will strike the first tee shot at the County Antrim course at 6:35 am local time, after the 2011 cham-

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pion was grouped with Irish amateur James Sugrue and American Charley Hoffman.

McIlroy, winner in 2014, will play with Ryder Cup teammate Paul Casey and US Open champion Gary Woodland.

Tiger Woods, who ended an 11-year majors drought to win the Masters in April, has a late start time on the opening day when he will play with Englishman Matt Wallace and

2018 Masters winner Patrick Reed.

World number one Brooks Koepka also tees off after lunch with former winner Louis Oosthuizen and Shubhankar Sharma.

The 7,344-yard, par-71 seaside links will present new challenges having not been on the Open rota since 1951. Straight-hitting Molinari says it will reward accuracy.

"I remember most of the holes (from playing the Irish Open in 2012)," he said. "It was quite a big challenge, especially at the beginning, to get used to it."

"I guess it's something you learn to deal with. I know it's a strong golf course, mostly positional, like many links it's not really a course that you can overpower."

Rory McIlroy has signalled an attacking policy for this week's British Open, saying he hopes to use his driver liberally at Royal Portrush after having enjoyed considerable success with the strategy last year.

The par-71 Portrush measures a whisker over 7,300 yards, though links courses generally play shorter than their yardages due to firm fairways that afford plenty of roll.

Long hitters such as McIlroy need not hit their driver often but it can be advantageous to do so.

"Carnoustie last year I didn't envisage hitting that many drivers and then I got there the week of the tournament," McIlroy told Reuters of last year's British Open in an interview organised by NBC's Golf Channel.

What he saw at the Scottish course was less potential for trouble with wayward drives than he expected. A subsequent tie for second vindicated

his attacking game-plan.

"I think what they've started to do at Open championships, to accommodate spectators, they've taken a lot of the gorse bushes away so Carnoustie last year I hit driver everywhere," he said.

"I'm not expecting to do that at Portrush (but) it might be a case of like Carnoustie last year where I (arrive) thinking I'm only going to hit three or four drivers during the round but in actual fact it could be more like seven or eight, or nine or 10."

McIlroy guesses that he has played Portrush between 50 and 100 times but only a handful of occasions since a re-design two years ago that included two new holes.

At Portrush in 2005, a 16-year-old

McIlroy shattered the course record in shooting 61 at the North of Ireland Championship.

To commemorate, McIlroy has released a limited run of 61-degree wedges in partnership with NBC's subscription website GOLFPASS.

McIlroy made a quick stop at Portrush en route to the Scottish Open, where he tied for 34th on Sunday.

Though he found his comfort level quickly, he said he still thinks of the par-three known as 'Calamity Corner' as the 14th hole, even though it is now the 16th.

"It's just so hard for me to wrap my head around the new layout," he said.

"I keep calling them the old hole numbers."



Tiger Woods, of the US, tees off the 2nd at Royal Portrush Golf Club during a practice round ahead of the 148th Open Golf Championship in Portrush, Northern Ireland on July 15. The Open Golf Championships takes place between July 18-21. (AP)

'Pogba must focus on pre-season'

LONDON, July 15, (RTRS): Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba must distance himself from speculation that he is set to end an unhappy spell at Old Trafford and focus on pre-season training until a decision is reached on his future, club legend Bryan Robson said.

Pogba's agent Mino Raiola recently told The Times that the 26-year-old intends to leave the club, while the player said in Tokyo last month that he thought it might be time for a "new challenge somewhere else".

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer hit out at the media during a pre-season tour of Australia, saying there was an agenda against the French World Cup winner.

"There's a lot of speculation in the media about Paul. He's a top player," former United captain Robson, who spent 13 years at the club, told Sky Sports. "You're a United player, you're contracted to them so you have to give everything for the club, the team and the fans."

"Get your head down, do your pre-season as well as you can – which, from what I've seen in the training sessions, he has done – and if something happens and the club want it to happen, or nothing happens then you've got to get on with it."

Pogba, who moved to United from Juventus in 2016 for a then-world record fee of 89.3 million pounds (\$112.23 million), has produced inconsistent displays despite scoring 31 goals in 142 appearances in all competitions.