

PINEHURST NEWS

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Clanton goes on afternoon birdie binge to secure Women's North & South Amateur Championship

VILLAGE OF PINEHURST, NC (July 24, 2010) – Shaking off some early nerves and pushing through afternoon sweltering heat, top-seeded Cydney Clanton birdied six holes in a 13-hole stretch to capture the 108th Women's North & South Amateur Championship at Pinehurst No. 2 on Saturday.

Last year's runner-up, a rising senior at Auburn and a member of the 2010 Curtis Cup team, joined the likes of Morgan Pressel, Donna Andrews and Peggy Kirk Bell as winners of this prestigious amateur tournament.

"Any win is a high achievement, and especially with such a good field here," said Clanton, who defeated Lisa McCloskey of Southern Cal 3 and 1 after beating her in the semifinals in 2009. "This win is amazing for me and gets my confidence booming, just to know that you are capable of winning.

"I hit a lot of good shots and made a lot of birdies, so this just gives me momentum heading into the U.S. Women's Amateur," added Clanton of Rockwell.

The final 36-hole match was decided in the afternoon as much off the tee as anywhere as Clanton consistently drove 50-70 yards past her competitor while hitting 13 straight fairways and 14 consecutive greens in regulation before her 18-foot birdie putt on the 35th hole sealed her victory.

Clanton squandered a 3-up lead in last year's final match, and trailed 1-up after the first 18 holes of the morning after some sloppy play.

McCloskey then got her down two holes after sinking a 6-foot birdie on the 22nd hole before Clanton began to assert herself, getting all square on the seventh hole when she hit her 180-yard approach shot into the wind to a back pin placement within 3 feet.

"I probably hit the best iron I hit all day on No. 7," Clanton said. "I hit about as perfect of a 5-iron as I could hit. That kind of sparked a little bit of momentum, especially winning that hole and getting the match all square. I turned to my caddie and told her, 'Now it's my time to take control.'"

Clanton gained the lead for good with a 21-foot downhill birdie putt on the 27th hole, then won three of the next four holes to force McCloskey, the No. 6 seed from Houston, to play catch up.

“I pretty much lost the match right there,” said McCloskey, who contributed to her late downfall by three-putting from 7 feet on the 31st hole to put Clanton up by four holes.