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**PREPS** BOYS' AND GIRLS' GOLF STATE TOURNAMENT

# Defending 3A champ takes share of lead

New Prague's Taylor Ledwein had a rough start before finding her groove.

By HEATHER RULE
Special to the Star Tribune

Seven holes into her opening round, New Prague senior Taylor Ledwein was 2 over par as she looked to defend her Class 3A girls' golf state title. She talked with her coach and things turned around.

She shot a 71 Tuesday at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids.

"Our goal was even," Ledwein said. "So I under was better than what our goal was."

Ledwein said her putting was good and that she hit her driver really well. On her 17th hole, her tee shot landed less than a foot from the pin. She birdied the ninth hole before she hit her stride for three more birdies.

Her score gave her a share of the lead with eighth-grader Cayla Kim of Stillwater.

"I think some people want to put pressure on, but since it's my last tournament ... me and my coach [Trojans assistant Stephanie Neisen] just went out there and had fun," Ledwein said.

Hopkins junior Julia Hall, Buffalo sophomore Hanna Morin and Edina senior Christine Portillo are tied for third place after shooting rounds of 72.

Portillo's score led the Hornets to a 298 team total and a 19-shot lead over Forest Lake. Shooting under 300 was a goal this year for the Hornets, coach Mark Harelstad said. The defending team champs shot a 310 on Day 1 last year.

"We were hoping that this day would come, and it finally did," Harelstad said. "And it's a great day to do it."

They hit their fairways well, which minimized their putts, Harelstad said. Senior Hannah Hankinson, who tied for second individually is 2015, struggled a little more but saved herself by sinking 5- and 6-foot putts, her coach said. She shot a 75.

"I wasn't hitting it the best, so I was able to make a lot of pars, which was good," Hankinson said.

Play for the boys' tournament was suspended shortly after 4:30 p.m. because of the threat of severe weather.

The boys will finish their first rounds from where they left off at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday. Three boys' teams already finished.

Both final rounds will start as scheduled, with the girls at 7:30 a.m. and the boys at noon.

ELIZABETH FLORES • eflores@startribune.com
Defending champion Taylor Ledwein of New Prague shot a 71 in Tuesday's first round of the Class 3A girls' golf state tournament at Bunker Hills to share the lead with Stillwater's Cayla Kim.

### Class 2A

Detroit Lakes senior Kate Smith has positioned herself to become the first five-time state golf champion (boys or girls). Smith fired a 3-under-par 69 to garner the top spot in the girls' field when play was suspended because of inclement weather with 24 golfers still on the course at Ridges at Sand Creek in Jordan. She holds a two-shot lead over Visitation junior Anni Heck.

The Lakers also own a 10-shot lead over Lake City in the team competition.

No boys completed the first round of play. They, along with the remaining girls, will resume first-round play at 7 a.m. Wednesday.

### Class 1A

The Fillmore Central girls' squad, which gradually has risen in state tournament team competition, opened a 20-shot cushion over Windom Area at Pebble Creek in Becker.

The Falcons were the state tournament runners-up last year after finishing third in 2014.

Sophie Gray of Legacy Christian and Abby Herding of Westbrook-Walnut Grove shared medalist honors with 6-over 78s.

Play was suspended in the boys' tournament with 48 golfers still on the course.

### SUSPENDED PLAY

Tuesday's weather was most disruptive to the Class 2A golf state tournament at Ridges of Sand Creek in Jordan.

**Class 2A:** No boys completed the first round of play. They and those girls who did not finish will resume first-round play at 7 a.m. The final round also will be played.

**Class 1A:** Most boys will finish their first rounds from where they left off at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday at Bunker Hills in Coon Rapids. Three boys' teams finished their first round. The final round for girls starts at 7:30 a.m., with the boys starting at noon.

**Class 1A:** The least affected tournament, played at Pebble Creek in Becker, will have 48 boys finishing their first round Wednesday morning.

**GOLF** 116TH U.S. OPEN

**NOTES**

# McIlroy not good match for Oakmont course

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**Rory McIlroy** winced ever so slightly as he uttered the words, well aware of their connotations even though he intended no disrespect to some of the greatest moments of his career.

Four major championships, all with what look like borderline typo scores following round after round of predatory — and in some cases near flawless — golf. And all four, by the 27-year-old's own admission, under relatively benign circumstances compared with what awaits during this week's U.S. Open at burly Oakmont.

"The majors I have won have been soft and under par and more suited my style of game," McIlroy said.

Oakmont, not so much.

Then again, the iconic course tucked in the western Pennsylvania hills isn't designed to litter players' scorecards with a Sharpie's worth of red numbers. If it's possible to argue that there's a hole on the résumé of a player who rose to No. 1 in the world before his 24th birthday, it may be that for all of McIlroy's gaudy talent, he has yet to triumph in a major when grit — and not glitz — is required.

It's a notion the 2013 U.S. Open champion is well aware of, one he'll try to put to rest this weekend.

"To be able to win on a course like this with the conditions the way they are, it would probably be my, I don't know, maybe my biggest accomplishment in the game," he said. "But definitely would make me feel like a more complete player, I guess."

### Rain expected

With the U.S. Open play beginning Thursday, the greens are playing fast and grounds management considers the course to be in good shape.

But weather forecasts have scattered rain and thunderstorms beginning Wednesday and possibly continuing through Friday. There is a 50 percent chance of storms Wednesday, 70 percent Thursday and down to 30 percent Friday.

Grounds superintendent **John Zimmers** is aware of the possibility of rain changing the course for the Open. He was pleased with how the course was looking Monday, but the weather forecast might change how he and his staff prepare the course.

"Our concern now is the rain they are saying is coming Wednesday and Thursday," Zimmers said. "Just need to prepare for it."

**Jordan Spieth** acknowledged that rain could significantly change the course.

"If the fairways are softer, it's going to be a lot easier to hold them, which makes a huge difference because of how much pitch is in these fairways," Spieth said.

He added that direction is a major part of playing Oakmont and that rain can add some leeway for golfers to miss a little and still end up in the fairway.

"Yeah, if it doesn't change, it will be over par," Spieth said. "If it does, if it rains, you can shoot under par."

Much of the course is hand watered and it is evaluated throughout the day for the next choice of action. If rain is imminent, Zimmers will need to avoid watering the course to remain in line with his goals of a fast course.

GENE J. PUSKAR • Associated Press
Rory McIlroy walked to the 18th tee box during a practice round Monday at Oakmont Country Club.

### Phil's friendly skies

If there's a drawback to flying "Air Phil," it's this: no frequent flyer points.

But that didn't dissuade **Phil Mickelson** from another cross-country trip on the eve of a U.S. Open. Lefty left Oakmont on his private plane for San Diego to attend daughter **Sophia's** eighth-grade graduation. He's expected back in time to squeeze in a practice round Wednesday ahead of Thursday's start.

If the trip sounds familiar, it should.

Mickelson took basically the same route in 2013, when he was playing at Merion and returned home to attend the eighth-grade graduation of his older daughter, **Amelia**. That trip covered 2,400 miles, but this time Mickelson might want to leave a little earlier. At Merion, he landed barely 3 hours before his tee time and three-putted his first hole for a bogey.

### Rose on tight timetable

**Justin Rose** called his recovery from back problems just in time to play the U.S. Open a "race against the clock."

But the time away from the game — Rose missed two events struggling with a disk flare-up — could prove a blessing in disguise.

"I've done everything humanly possible to be here from a recovery point of view, from a fitness point of view, from a practice point of view, but there's no doubt my practice schedule has certainly been on the light side. I only started hitting the driver two or three days ago.

"So it's definitely been a tight timetable," he added.

On the plus side, Rose said: "I'm coming in fresh, which is the great news. I think, obviously, this golf course is going to require a huge amount of patience, and I think that having that quiet time to sit back and assess my game and assess the challenge this week could be an advantage."

# Why must U.S. Open courses be such torture?

◂ **SOUHAN** from C1

of hack-it-from-the-rough acts of desperation.

Oakmont signals a return to the bad old days, when one of the world's best players could hit a shot a few feet off the fairway and be unable to advance the ball — if it could be found at all.

"If it played like yesterday with the 15-mile-an-hour wind, it's going to be significantly over par," Spieth said on Monday of the winning score. "If it rains, you can shoot under par. I don't think anybody is going to be in the red come 72 holes."

The golf world might be in luck. Rain is in the forecast for most of Thursday, and Friday morning. Rain might soften the fairways and greens enough to hold slightly errant shots, and might slow the pace of putts.

In other words, it might take an act of God to make the course playable, or remotely enjoyable.

"We are the most sadistic folks you'll ever find; we're gluttons for punishment; we like hard, difficult stuff in Pittsburgh," Chick Wagner, a three-time Oakmont Country Club champion, told ESPN. "We're not a steel town anymore, but we still have that steeler mentality."

That sounds admirable and understandably provincial, but working in a steel factory isn't a spectator sport, and if the Pittsburgh Steelers couldn't find the ball after an incomplete pass, the NFL would be about as popular as jai alai.

Golf organizations shouldn't be insulted by eagles, and golfers shouldn't be discouraged from trying to make them.

In 2007, Angel Cabrera won with a score of 5 over par. He made zero eagles and 13 birdies in 72 holes. He won not because he necessarily hit remarkable shots but because he didn't hit terrible shots. He made zero double bogeys. He won with an aversion to risk, which sounds like a good pitch for a financial institution and a terrible draw for a sport that is always trying to woo casual sports fans.

"Golf courses are either fun, or great, or hard," Phil Mickelson said. "There's nothing fun about Oakmont. There's nothing great about Oakmont. But it's extremely hard. It's probably the hardest course I've ever played."

Purists argue that Oakmont provides the toughest test in golf and therefore identifies the most worthy and well-rounded champion.

That sounds noble, but since 2005 the U.S. Open has produced champions named Michael Campbell, Geoff Ogilvy, Lucas Glover, Webb Simpson and Martin Kaymer.

Too often, the U.S. Open rewards caution rather than talent and risk-taking. As Penick might have asked, what's wrong with eagles?

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**BRIEFLY**

# Chile, Argentina advance

**Eduardo Vargas** and **Alexis Sanchez** each scored twice and Chile advanced to the Copa America Centenario quarterfinals with a 4-2 win over Panama on Tuesday.

Chile (2-0-1) likely will face Mexico in the next round on Saturday in Santa Clara, California. Panama (1-0-2) was eliminated.

**Erik Lamela** and **Ezequiel Lavezzi** scored two minutes apart early in the first half and **Victor Cuesta** scored his first international goal later in the half as Argentina dominated Bolivia 3-0 to win Group D.

**Portugal, Iceland tie**

**Cristiano Ronaldo's** Portugal was upstaged by a team of Icelanders in a 1-1 draw and Hungary beat Austria 2-0 on a day of surprises at the European Championship on Tuesday.

The smallest country ever to play at a European Championship, with its population of 330,000, Iceland made its major tournament debut in style.

Having recently helped Real Madrid win the Champions League in Milan, Ronaldo lacked his usual accuracy in front of goal, missicking a great chance in the first half and then sending a powerful header straight at the Iceland goalkeeper from close range in the second.

**NFL**

# Dallas' McFadden has elbow surgery

Cowboys running back **Darren McFadden** had surgery Tuesday morning to repair a fractured right elbow. He will miss "a couple months," according to Cowboys coach **Jason Garrett**.

"Darren McFadden hurt his elbow in an accident at home over Memorial Day weekend," Garrett said. "He came back in and practiced last week, but it still bothered him, and he told our training staff at the end of the week. And then, in the physical it was determined he has a break in his elbow.

"We do anticipate seeing him at some point in training camp. But the surgery went well. We do anticipate him making a full recovery."

McFadden ranked fourth in the league with 1,089 yards last season after signing as a free agent in the offseason. But the Cowboys signed veteran **Alfred Morris** in free agency and drafted Ohio State's **Ezekiel Elliott** with the fourth overall pick.

McFadden, who turns 29 in August, had an injury plagued first six seasons with the Raiders. But he has played all 16 games each of the past two seasons.

• A source says Chargers first-round draft pick **Joey Bosa** is skipping this week's minicamp after a dispute arose in contract negotiations.

• The Broncos signed linebacker **Brandon Marshall** to a four-year, $32 million extension.

**AROUND THE HORN**

**Tennis:** No. 2 seed **Stan Wawrinka** lost to **Fernando Verdasco** 6-2, 7-6 (3) in the first round at Queen's Club in London. ... **Maria Sharapova** appealed her two-year doping ban to the highest court in sports, and an expedited ruling will be issued next month ahead of the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

**WNBA: Tina Charles** scored 28 points and **Sugar Rodgers** added 18 to help New York beat Dallas 95-88. ... **Tayler Hill** had 16 of her 21 points in the third overtime as Washington defeated Connecticut 109-106. ... **Moriah Jefferson** scored a career-high 19 points and **Dearica Hamby** had 15 points and 18 rebounds as San Antonio beat Seattle 77-70.

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