

Former UM pitcher follows daughter at golf tourney

BY LARRY MAHONEY
BDN STAFF

ORONO — Former University of Maine pitcher Stu Lacognata knows all about pressure situations. He pitched his Portland High School Bulldogs past Bangor in the Class A state championship 8-0 in 1980 and went on to win 24 games and pitch in the College World Series for the Black Bears. But he said he is “more nervous” than he ever was as a player watching his 16-year-old daughter Elizabeth Lacognata play lacrosse or golf. Elizabeth Lacognata, who will be a junior at Scarborough High School in the fall, finished tied for 35th among 64 players in the Maine Women’s Amateur golf tournament at the Penobscot Valley Country Club in Orono Wednesday with a 275 after rounds of 92, 95 and 88. “It’s nerve-wracking. There is nothing like watching your kid play a sport. It’s awesome. You’re proud. There’s a whole range of emotions,” said Stu

Lacognata, who is a pilot for United Airlines. “It’s cool being back up here. There are a lot of great memories,” said the 54-year-old Stu Lacognata, who was known for his slider and graduated from UMaine in 1984 after four College World Series appearances. He said his daughter has the “athletic gene in the the family, not me.” Stu Lacognata said the piece of advice he has given his daughter is to “not get too high when things are going well and don’t get too low when they aren’t. Keep an even keel. That makes all the difference in the world.” “He tells me to practice as much as I can and keep pushing even if I’m having a bad round,” said Elizabeth Lacognata. Elizabeth Lacognata can drive the ball a long way, but



Lacognata

she said “it doesn’t mean anything because I need to work on my short game and pull it together.” Stu Lacognata said his 20-year-old son, Alex, also wants to be involved in sports but in a sport he admits he knows nothing about: auto racing. “He is going to the University of Northwestern Ohio for High Performance Motorsports. He wants to work in NASCAR,” said Stu Lacognata. “What is really cool is he is pursuing his passion. It’s awesome. I’m so proud of him. He has done it on his own.” Lacognata was recently involved in a get-together for several of his former Black Bear teammates and said it was special. “There is a camaraderie that you have when a play a team sport together in college. When you get back together, it’s like you never missed a beat. It has been over 30 years. That’s unbelievable. It doesn’t seem that long ago. We told some good stories. It was great,” he said.



GABOR DEGRE | BDN
Bailey Plourde lines up a putt during the Maine Women’s Amateur championship at the Penobscot Valley Golf Course in Orono on Wednesday.

Creech

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when she drove into the rough. But she hit a nice approach shot onto the green and two-putted for par to retain her one-stroke lead, and she said that was a turning point. “I had a terrible lie in the rough, and I just wanted to get it on the green. I punched it out and, luckily, it ran up on the green and I made an easy four. That got me back on track and my momentum came back a little bit,” said Creech. She picked up a shot on No. 12 when she parred the hole, and Plourde lipped out a 6-foot par putt and had to settle for a bogey. Creech expanded the lead to four strokes on No. 13 when she used a nice approach shot to birdie the hole while Plourde registered a bogey when her chip shot landed in the bunker and she three-putted, missing a 6-foot par putt. Creech sewed up the title on the 14th when she parred the hole, and Plourde registered a nine by driving into

the bunker, chipping over the green into the out-of-bounds for a one-stroke penalty, chipping into the bunker, taking two shots to get onto the green and then three-putting. “It was like a very bad nightmare,” said Plourde. “I lost focus. I was crumbling, I was out of it. I should have stayed focus and played my game.” “Bailey played tough. It was sad to see that. I’ve done that. She’ll learn from it,” said Creech. Plourde said she will take the positives out of her performance over the three days. “I know I have a solid game. I’ll keep focused for the next tournament,” said Plourde, who will be a senior at Lincoln Academy in the fall. Rounding out the top 10 were Sarah Hansen of the Val Halla Golf and Recreation Center in Cumberland and Kristin Kannegieser of the Martindale Country Club in Auburn, both with 239s; Erin Holmes of Val Halla and Liz Wiltshire of the Natanis Golf Course in Vassalboro, who had 242s; and the Bangor Municipal Golf

Course’s Liz Coffin, who shot a 244. Sixty-four women played in the tournament.

Legion

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Jared Brooks gave Coastal Landscape a 1-0 lead. Kemble required just 32 pitches to hold Coastal Landscape scoreless over the next four innings. “He was just trying to establish the inside part of the plate, and that’s really his M.O.,” said Morris. “You’ve got to throw to all parts of the plate, and he did a great job of that. He also did a great job with his composure and not letting that situation hurt him.” Coastal Landscape made it 2-0 in the sixth on an RBI single by Sinclair. Sinclair retired 13 straight batters through the middle innings, but his pitch count began to mount, and Coffee News finally broke through in the seventh. Derek Fournier hit a one-out single and Ben Critchton drew the game’s first walk before Cowperthwaite took an 0-1 pitch to the opposite field for a run-scoring single to right. Colford came on as a pinch hitter and flared the first pitch he saw for a single to

right that delivered the tying run. “I knew it was first and third, so I was focused on getting it to the outfield and getting the runner from third in,” said Colford. “I just wanted to tie the game.” Kemble singled to center to open the Coffee News eighth and reached second on Sam Huston’s sacrifice off reliever Alex Jacobs. Hillier then skied a fly ball to right that landed just inside the foul line for a double that gave the Comrades the lead. “I got up in the count and was just looking for my pitch,” said Hillier. “I got a little two-seamer on the corner and fisted to right. It was questionable because I saw it twirling toward the line, but I was hoping it would get down and fortunately it did.” Kemble followed that up with a 1-2-3 ninth as he retired the last nine batters he faced. “We’re really resilient,” said Hillier. “We keep grinding.” Coastal Landscape 100 001 000 — 2 4 1 Coffee News 000 000 21x — 3 7 0 Sinclair, Jacobs (8) and McCarthy; Kemble and Fournier

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