

Ko prevails in playoff to win Marathon Classic

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Top-ranked Lydia Ko of New Zealand birdied the fourth playoff hole to win a p l a y o f f with Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand and Mirim Lee of South Korea at the LPGA Marathon Classic on Sunday in Sylvania, Ohio.

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After finishing 72 holes tied at 14-under-par 270, the three players returned to No. 18 and each parred the hole three times before Ko ended the marathon by making a 10-foot birdie putt.

The 19-year-old Ko won

for the 14th time in her career and the fourth time this season, including a major title at the ANA Inspiration. She will remain No. 1 in the world for the 39th consecutive week.

Ko, who won the Marathon title in 2014 and tied for third last year, has been in five playoffs during her career and won four times. She closed with a final-round 69 at Highland Lakes.

Ko regrouped after missing a 5-foot birdie putt on the third extra playoff hole. Jutanugarn also had opportunities to close out the playoff but missed birdie putts of 14

and eight feet in the first two playoff holes at No. 18.

Lee played her way into the playoff with birdies on Nos. 13, 15, 16 and 17 before finishing the final round with a bogey at No. 18.

Jutanugarn, who won three consecutive LPGA Tour events in May, made an eagle on No. 17 and posted a 68 in the fourth round to get into the playoff.

Hyo Joo Kim of South Korea, who began the day with a three-shot lead, barely missed the playoff, finishing 72 holes at 13-under after struggling to a final-round 73 that included four bogeys.

Stacy Lewis claimed fifth at 11-under after a closing 71.

Spieth ends scoring drought

Jordan Spieth shot a 3-under round of 68 during the final round of the British Open on Sunday, marking his first round under par at a major since The Masters in April.

The third-ranked golfer in the world made the cut on the number Friday, and had carded rounds of 71, 75 and 72 entering Sunday. After opening with three pars, Spieth eagled the par-5 fourth hole and posted a 35 on the front nine. He then

made his way through his final nine holes with three birdies against a bogey to close with a 68.

Spieth carded four rounds in the 70s in finishing in a tie for 37th at the U.S. Open last month.

Following his third round at Royal Troon on Saturday, Spieth called criticism of his 2016 season “unfair” following his breakthrough 2015 campaign.

“It’s been tough given I think it’s been a solid year and I think, had last year not happened, I’d be having a lot of positive questions,” Spieth said Saturday. “Instead, most of the questions I get

are comparing to last year and therefore negative because it’s not to the same standard.

“So that’s almost tough to then convince myself that you’re having a good year when the questions I get make me feel like it’s not. So that’s a bit unfair to me, but don’t feel sorry for me. I’ll still be OK. But I would appreciate if people would look at the positives over comparing to maybe hopefully what would happen to me a few times in my career a year, like last year. It seems a bit unfair at 22 to be expecting something like that all the time.”

Lobster

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The West had a short drive end with a punt from Leavitt’s Levi Craig — which turned out to be the lone punt of the game. The East got the ball back in West territory and needed just six plays for an Esposito touchdown run.

The East got the ball right back thanks to a successful squib kick that bounced off a West up-man. The ensuing drive lasted one play into the second quarter, and Esposito barreled in from a yard out to make it 30-8.

The West regained its scoring touch on the next drive. Using eight runs (including four from Doyon) and one pass, the West cut the deficit to 30-14 with a 1-yard QB keeper by Therrien.

At that point in the game, it was Miller time. The Old Town receiver was targeted four straight times by teammate Jake Jarvis, and caught two of them, including a 13-yard scoring strike.

The West sandwiched a pair of scoring drives (with Craig touchdown passes going to Thornton Academy’s Corey Hart and Doyon) around a failed fourth-down pass from the East on a bad punt snap, cutting the lead to 36-30 with 22 seconds left in the half.



ANDREE KEHN | SUN JOURNAL

West quarterback Levi Craig of Leavitt gets taken down by the East’s Dylan Koza of Brunswick during the 27th annual Maine Lobster Bowl Classic held in Biddeford on Saturday.

That was more than enough time for Miller, who caught a short pass from Madison’s Chase Malloy on the East’s next play, then ran up the sideline, hurdled a defender, and coasted in for six with 4.4 seconds left for a 44-30 East lead at halftime.

“I’m just kind of a big receiver. Unless if there’s a big corner on me, it’s kind of a mismatch,” said Miller, the East MVP. “They were playing kind of far back in the beginning of the game. So we just kept doing short routes. It worked out.”

In a game that feature

roughly 150 plays, Miller made the most of getting the ball in his hands eight times on offense. He caught seven passes for 207 yards and four touchdowns, and also added a 6-yard run.

“I just wanted to make a play every time I touched the ball because I knew we had a lot of playmakers on our team,” Miller said. “I just knew every time that I got the ball I just had to make something happen because I wasn’t going to get it much.”

Miller almost had another touchdown on the East’s first drive of the second half,

but Yarmouth’s Jack Snyder jumped in front of a Malloy pass intended for Miller at the goal line, then returned the pick 45 yards. Therrien later ran in from one yard out on fourth down to cut the game to 44-38.

Miller countered with his third scoring catch of the game, and second from Jarvis, from 40 yards out and off a deflection.

“It was still there,” Miller said of his chemistry with Jarvis. “You could tell.”

York’s Cullen McCarty did the scoring honors for the West next, rumbling in

from seven yards out. Then after the East opened the fourth quarter with a drive ending in an overthrow from Jarvis to Miller, Doyon scored from one yard out to tie the game 52-52.

“Coming from behind, it was hard, but we did a good job of battling the entire game and never giving up,” Therrien said.

“It shows what kind of character they have, they didn’t give up,” added Stacen Doucette, Oak Hill’s coach who led the West coaching staff.

Jarvis and Miller hooked up one last time for a score, ending the quartet of touchdown strikes with a 46-yarder.

The West’s response was a three-and-out, punctuated by a Doyon 2-yard loss on a fake-punt run.

A 12-play, all-run drive by the East ran the clock down from six minutes to 17 seconds. Faced with 95 yards to go, the West pulled out some tricks. Craig hit Hart for a hook-and-ladder with Doyon on second down, then the West was given one last chance thanks to a pass interference penalty on the next play.

Therrien passed to Doyon, who ran up the left sideline before lateraling to McCarty, who then tossed it to Therrien, who ran out of room, time and options, and the game finally came to an end.

“I’ve been a part of a game that was a 42-35 state game, and it was whoever made the first mistake lost,” Doucette said. “We made a couple mistakes, and came out on the wrong side of the (scoreboard), but there’s no losers here in this game. Everybody’s smiling. They’re upset they lost, but they know they played well. And they know it’s for a good cause.”

Doyon led the West with three touchdowns (two running, one receiving). He ran 18 times for 75 yards and caught six passes for 56 more yards.

“He did everything today. All week we knew this kid was a stud,” Therrien said of Doyon. “I’ve played with some great running backs and (Zach and Cullen) are phenomenal. I felt like I was handing the ball right back off to Alex (Mace) and Kyle (Flaherty).”

The East had a three-headed monster at running back, with Esposito, Bessey and Messalonskee’s Jack Bernatchez. The East ran for 271 yards to go along with 298 passing yards from Jarvis and Malloy.

“We knew we could put points up because we knew we had a lot of playmakers,” Miller said. “We just tried to get everybody the ball in space, let people go to work, have mismatches. It worked out.”



IAN RUTHERFORD | USA TODAY SPORTS

Henrik Stenson (right) and his caddie Garath Lord line up a putt during the final round of the 145th British Open Championship golf tournament Sunday at Royal Troon Golf Club in Scotland.

Stenson

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after drilling a majestic approach to tap-in range while overnight leader Stenson took three putts.

The Swede’s response was instant and emphatic as he birdied five of the next seven holes, making a complete nonsense of gusts of up to 25 mph on the windswept Ayrshire coastline.

Five-time major champion Mickelson, however, refused to be cowed and an eagle three at the fourth followed by a birdie two holes later meant he was only one behind at the turn.

The putts continued to fall at the 10th as both players birdied yet again.

The 46-year-old American, bidding to become the oldest winner of the Open in the modern era, levelled again at the 11th when his title rival three-putted for the second time.

As the wind died down and the sun made a rare appearance, Stenson deliv-

ered the coup de grace with a hat-trick of birdies at the 14th, 15th and 16th giving him a two-shot advantage with two holes to play.

Mickelson’s last chance came and went at the 16th when his eagle putt just missed.

Stenson, full of adrenaline on the 18th tee, hammered his tee shot 310 yards down the fairway and was mightily relieved to see it stop 12 inches short of one of Royal Troon’s fiendish pot bunkers.

He safely found the green with his approach and rolled in another monster putt to complete victory and post the 29th round of 63 in major championship history.

“I knew he wasn’t going to back down at any point and in a way that makes it easier,” said Stenson. “I knew I had to keep on pushing, keep on giving myself birdie chances.”

Mickelson, who beat Stenson into second place when he won the 2013 Open at Muirfield, was generous in his praise.

“It’s disappointing to

come in second but I’m happy for Henrik, he’s really a great champion,” said the left-hander. “We’ve been friends for some time.”

“I’ve always thought he is one of the best ball-strikers in the game and that major championships are perfectly suited for him. I knew he would ultimately come through and win.”

Despite missing out on a sixth major title at the age of 46, Mickelson said he can take some consolation — quite a lot of satisfaction — from how he played.

“I’m very excited with the work that I’ve put in ... the way I was able to hit fairways with ease coming down the stretch and hit my iron shots right on line,” he said.

Whether or not he looks back on it with fondness or as the one that got away, he was not sure.

“I’m not sure how I’m going to feel about that,” Mickelson said. “... I played what I feel was well enough to win this championship by a number of strokes. And yet I got beat.”

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