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Lapointe wins GTA amateur

As if drives of up to 270 yards and a soft touch around the greens wasn't enough of an arsenal, Mary Ann Lapointe discovered another weapon—her track record.

Lapointe padded an already impressive resume by capturing the second annual Toronto Star Women's Amateur on Friday, defeating Lindsay Knowlton of Toronto 5 and 4 in the final of the Greater Toronto Area golf championship.

Knowlton, last year's Ontario junior champion, found herself in awe before the final match began as she listened to the announcer detail Lapointe's three Canadian championships, five Ontario titles and three Ontario match-play victories (not to mention six Quebec amateur titles).

"When I heard her bio, I thought, 'Oh my God,'" the 19-year-old Knowlton said. "A young player like myself looks up to her."

Meanwhile Lapointe, confident in her play of late, felt the tournament was her's to lose.

"Lindsay's a very good player but there was a fair crowd following us, which is tough if you're not used to that," Lapointe said. "She skulled a few chip shots early on, which is a sign of nerves because you're tight in the shoulders."

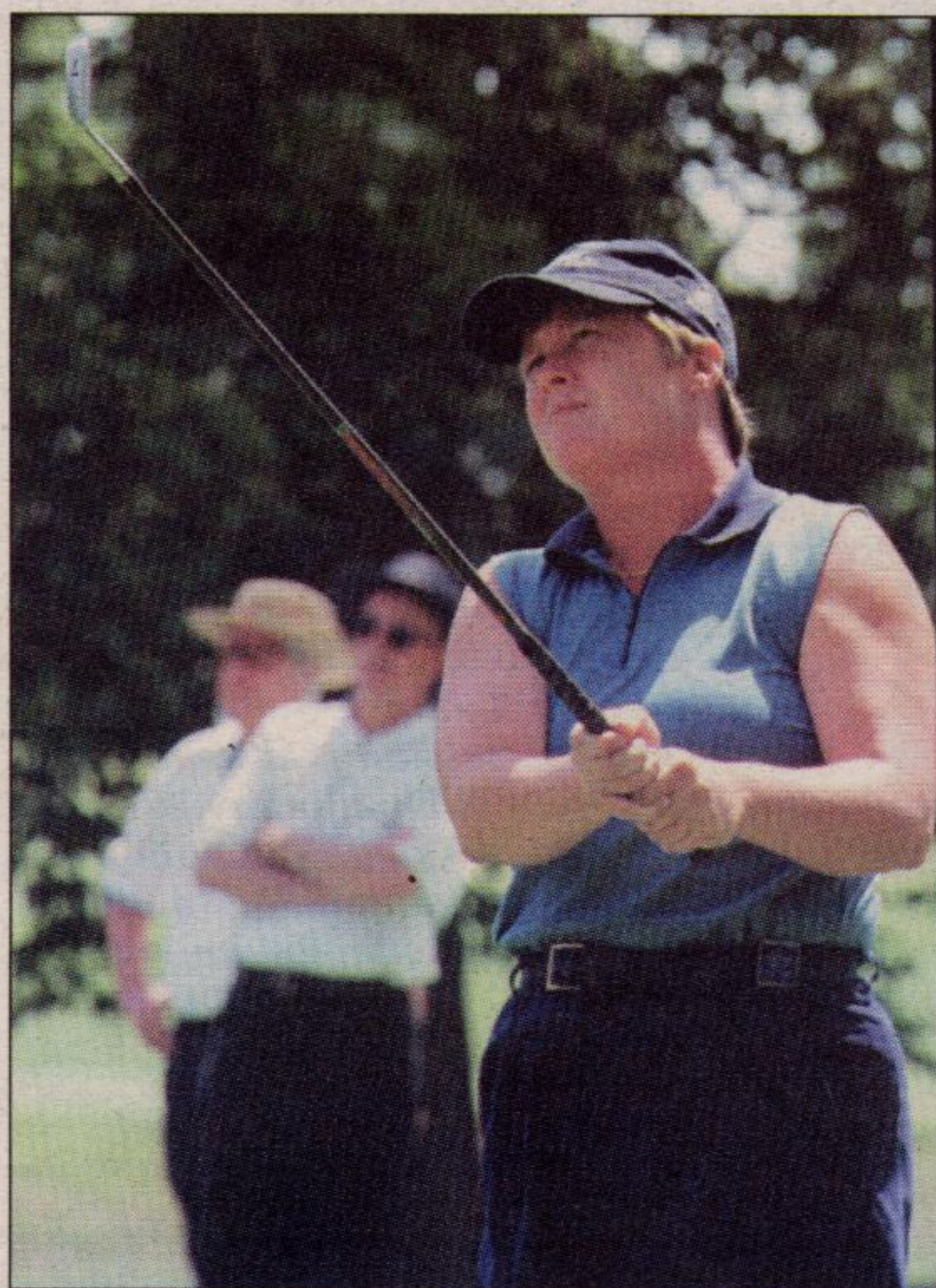
Lapointe entered the tournament with the strategy of saving her best for the matches on the last two days.

"I took it easy in qualifying and qualified 10th," she said. "Then when I saw the draw I started thinking maybe I overdid it."

Lapointe encountered her toughest opponent, Peterborough's Heather Dobbin, in the opening round of match play. Lapointe was four up starting the back nine but three consecutive birdies by Dobbin closed the gap to one. Dobbin again turned up the heat by sinking a 25-foot birdie putt on 17 but Lapointe countered with a 15-foot birdie putt of her own to keep the lead. A bogey by Lapointe on the 18th opened the door for Dobbin to send the match to a playoff but Lapointe won the match on the second playoff hole with a par.

Next up was defending Canadian champ Jan Dowling. Lapointe never trailed but Dowling stayed close until Lapointe birdied the 16th and 17th to win 3 and 1.

In the semifinals Lapointe faced Judith Allan-Kyrinis of the host Thornhill Country Club. Lapointe said Allan-



Mary Ann Lapointe follows a shot during final round play at the Toronto Star Women's Amateur Golf Tournament.



North Halton Golf and Country Club's Mary Ann Lapointe, right, accepts the Toronto Star Women's Amateur golf tournament championship plaque and trophy from Ruth Anne Winter, a member of the Torstar board of directors.

Kyrinis, who is expecting a child in a week, was showing the strain of a long week.

"I think she was tired," Lapointe said. "She was a lot different on the back nine. It was a busy week with lots of golf."

In the final, Lapointe again took an early lead. She fired an eagle, two birdies, seven pars and three bogeys before putting the match away by chipping in from 22 feet for birdie on the 14th hole.

"It was a great experience playing against her," said Knowlton, who plays in the U.S. Amateur next week in Kansas. "I didn't give up. (Lapointe) is quiet, but she knows what she has to do. Shotwise, she has everything."

"I was hitting the driver well and my putting was good," Lapointe said. "Not too many can beat me when I'm doing that."

Lapointe hopes that holds true again as she begins play today (Wednesday) at the Ontario Match Play Championships in Elmira.

—Torstar News Service with files from Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Fifth at Ontario tourney Sinclair advances

Although she wasn't happy with her play, Gloria Sinclair is off to the Canadian Senior Ladies Amateur golf championships for the fifth time.

"It didn't feel that great. It was kind of scambly but the end result was good," Sinclair said, after finishing fifth at the Ontario Senior Ladies' Championship. "I wasn't hitting the ball really solid."

Sinclair opened the tournament with a 76 at Burlington Golf & Country Club, which left her just one shot off the lead. However, the eventual champion, Gayle Borthwick, fired a 68 on the second day to pull away from Sinclair and the rest of the field. She went on to win by 11 strokes with a three-day total of 215.

Sinclair, with rounds of 78 and 80 on the last two days, finished at 234. That earned her a berth in the Canadian championships to be held August 27 in Vancouver. Sinclair will also serve as an alternate for Ontario in the team competition.

Sinclair said she's been happy with her play since the Ontario championship, but said tournament play is another story.

"There's a lot more pressure."

Sinclair will also be playing in a qualifying tournament for the U.S. Senior Championships on Aug. 9.



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