

Laura Matthews shines at Canadian Open

BY JOHN GARINGER
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There is a very fine line in the game of golf, a line that separates the very, very good from the truly great. It can be a matter of two heavy irons in one round or two missed putts over 18 holes or two approach shots that just missed the green.

That's all it takes, something so small, yet it means the difference between making the cut and going home. It means the difference of earning a living on the pro tour or having to quit. Only the best players survive the intense pressure.

This week at the LPGA CN Canadian Women's Open in London, Ont. Essex native Laura Matthews survived the pressure, making the cut where 56 professionals failed to advance. The tournament ran from Aug. 10-13.

Laura is the daughter of Bob and MaryLou Henderson, both accomplished golfers in their own right. The Hendersons provided Laura with the early



Laura Matthews at the CN Canadian Women's Open last weekend.

Photo: RCGA/Graig Abel

training that would spring-board her career. She was good enough at the amateur level in her teens to be offered a scholarship to the University of Georgia in 1997. When she graduated she was offered an assistant

coaching position with the Lady Bulldogs in 2001. This fall she will begin her second year as coach of the Oklahoma State University women's golf team.

In addition to her coaching duties, Laura continues to

play competitive golf at the top amateur levels. This week, after a strong summer showing, she arrived in London for the CN Canadian

Women's Open.

We followed Laura through her practice rounds and the regular tournament rounds. Last Tuesday, after playing the course in her first practice round, she described the course as tough but fair. As the week wore on Laura was ready to challenge the pros. Time after time, after making a bad shot or a bogey, she replied with a great recovery shot or a birdie, showing an amazing ability to focus on the shot at hand. After Friday's round, she had made the "cut line", shooting five over par and joined the survivors for the weekend.

Over the next two days, Laura played steady golf, fearlessly shooting at the pins and accepting the challenges the London Hunt and Country Club had to offer. On the Sunday she finished three over par, completing the four-day tournament with a score of 298, 10 over par for the tournament. Laura

was a ways down the leaderboard at the end because of a few strokes here and there and a few missed putts.

Laura travels next to the 2006 World Amateur Team Championships in Stellenbosch, South Africa in October. She, along with Richard Scott, also a member at Kingsville Golf and Country Club, are members of the Canadian national team.

Matthews was a recognized member of the group competing at the Canadian Women's Open. As she walked up the last fairway Aug. 13, the huge crowd gave her an enthusiastic welcome. She waved and smiled, putted out and walked to meet the waiting cameras and reporters. Standing quietly to the side was her caddy, her father. When asked for his response on Matthews' play at the tournament, Bob Matthews responded "pretty darn proud."

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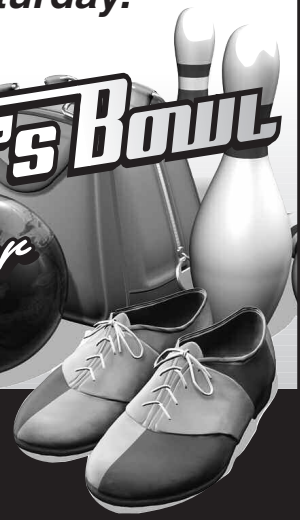
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