



INAUGURAL WOMEN'S PGA CUP | OCTOBER 22-26, 2019 | OMNI BARTON CREEK | AUSTIN, TX

United States rides a sizzling start on a chilly day to extend its Lead heading into the finale of the inaugural Women's PGA Cup

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By Bob Denney
PGA Historian

AUSTIN, Texas (October 25, 2019) - Bundled like they were heading to the ski slopes instead of the golf course, members of the United States Team battled 25-mile-per-hour gusts and wind chill in the high-30s to carve a 10-stroke lead over Canada after Friday's second round of the inaugural Women's PGA Cup.

The trio of Brittany Kelly of Indianapolis, Indiana; Alison Curdt of Reseda, California and Joanna Coe of Lutherville-Timonium, Maryland, began the day with a two-stroke advantage over the Canadians, sprinting out to a combined 4-under-par through seven holes on the Fazio Foothills Course. But, the comfort zone faded on the back nine as the wind continued to pick up. The U.S. closed with a 36-hole total of 448.

The Americans were a combined 8-over-par over the final three holes, while Canada - which once trailed by 20 strokes - was 2-over-par on the same gauntlet for a 458 total.

Great Britain & Ireland was next at 474, followed by Australia (484) and Sweden (487). The first international team competition for women PGA Professionals ends Saturday at the Omni Barton Creek Resort & Spa. The low three scorers on the respective five-member teams are counted in the final total. The U.S. Team also includes Ashley Grier of Springfield, Pennsylvania and Seul-Ki Park of Billerica, Massachusetts.

"They began so strong under brutal conditions on a golf course that is already incredibly challenging," said U.S. Captain Suzy Whaley, the president of the PGA of America. "And, to put that (challenging weather) on top of it, I was proud of their fight. They had a lot of grit."

Kelly, a PGA Assistant Professional at Woodland Country Club in Carmel, Indiana, followed her Thursday 69 with a hard-earned 75. Curdt, a PGA/LPGA Master Professional at Alison

Curdt Golf at Wood Ranch Golf Club in Simi Valley, California, posted a 76, and Coe, a PGA Assistant Director of Instruction at Baltimore Country Club, had a 78.

Canada's Rebecca Lee-Bentham of Toronto, Ontario, finished with a 75 to lead her team and keep it within striking distance of the Americans.

"I think we put together a great team effort with each of our rounds," said Kelly, the reigning Indiana Women's Open Champion. "It was a mind game for six hours. . . a totally different ball game today. Some short, some long, some crosswinds that were crazy. I was able to pull together a round that started well, but I didn't finish the way I wanted. You've got to take your numbers on a day like today."

Whaley, the PGA Director of Instruction at the Country Club of Mirasol in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, said that any lead is tenuous.

"I want them to focus tomorrow on just doing their own job," said Whaley. "At the end of the day, I don't want them worrying about what will happen, just stay in the moment and stay in the process."

Staying in the moment and following the process are familiar phrases for coaches and part of a "playbook" for Curdt, a practicing clinical psychologist and the national Vice President of the LPGA Teaching & Club Professionals Division.

"No matter what lead you have, you want to go out and be assertive tomorrow," said Curdt, whose 2-under-par round became unraveled on No. 12, when she couldn't locate her tee shot and settled for a triple bogey. "I'm feeling good about the mentality of this team. We just need to forget where we are as a number on (on the scoreboard) and just do our job and have fun doing it."

It was Curdt's ability to shake off a bad swing that impressed Whaley.

"Alison played so amazing today, and just had bad luck on the 12th hole," said Whaley. "She bounced back and birdied the next hole. She's such a wonderful role model for the rest of the team."

For Coe, the reigning PGA Women's Stroke Play Champion, it was a day of unfinished business. She suffered a five-hole bogey stretch between Holes 7-11.

"I made it hard today," said Coe. "Usually when conditions are hard, I play fairly well. I'm disappointed in my own back nine. It was tough, and to break 80 was probably pretty good. My short game was atrocious. You are not going to hit all the greens when things are crazy like this."

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