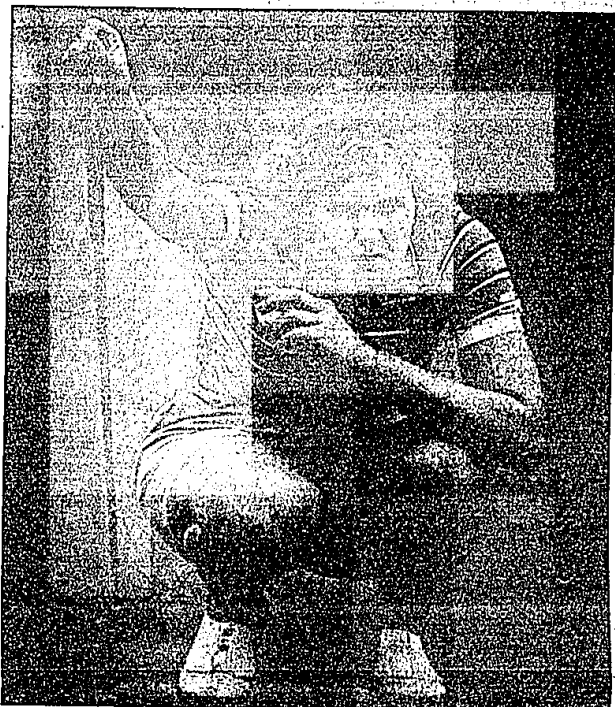




Long wait ends, Repasky rules



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

O&E golf champ Goralyn Repasky lines up a putt.

By C.J. Rlsak
staff writer

The drought for Goralyn Repasky is "finally" over.

The third time supposedly carries the charm, but for Repasky it took four tries before she stepped from the runner-up circle to the title in Wednesday's Observer & Eccentric Women's Golf Tournament at Whispering Willows Golf Course in Livonia.

Victory didn't come easy for the Livonia native who will start her sophomore year at Bowling Green State next week. She edged Ann Lauer of Birmingham, last year's champion, on the first playoff hole after each finished the 18-hole tournament with 79s.

CONTRIBUTOR HARRIS the championship flight, centering around Lauer (see accompanying column on this page) and her score on the eighth hole. Two players in the foursome in front of her — Julie Sproul and Kathy Herford — claimed Lauer first kicked her ball from behind a tree, then moved it back when she thought she had been spotted.

After a 45-minute delay to consult several yard experts, Whispering Willows assistant golf pro Tom Welsh said to go ahead with the playoff while awaiting a final ruling.

Repasky nailed down the triumph with her putter. Her drive on the playoff hole — No. 10 — went high and left, and her next shot was still more than 100 yards from the green. An eight iron rolled to the back fringe, 35 feet from the cup.

LAUER FARED better on the fairway. Two strong shots put her within 30 yards of the green. But her chip sailed to the back fringe, stopping inches away and nearly parallel to Repasky's.

Lauer putted first — and poorly. The ball rolled 12 feet past the cup on the down-sloping green. Repasky stopped up to her ball and tapped it to within six inches of the cup. She putted it in, then watched as Lauer missed her attempt to tie.

"I hit two bad shots, off the tee and in the fairway," said Repasky. But when Lauer's first putt carried well

past the cup, Repasky knew all she had to do was "just lag it up close."

"Finally," she said after her first triumph in four tries. She had finished second in three previous attempts, including last year, when Lauer beat her by a single stroke.

"I DID WANT to win it, but I didn't want to get too hyped up about it," the new champion said. "My goal was to shoot 77, but really I just wanted to make sure I'd break 80."

"This is the best I've played in a year and a half. This is the first time I've broken 80 in a year and a half."

Repasky needed a strong putt on the final hole of regulation to force the playoff. Trailing Lauer by one, the Livonian nailed her drive better than 220 yards into a blustery wind. Her second shot fell 15 yards shy of the green and her chip put her within 10 feet. She then salvaged par with a strong putt.

Lauer, playing in the threesome behind Repasky, was 20 yards short of the green after two shots at 18. Her chip also stopped 10 feet from the cup, but her try for a par fell one inch short.

REPASKY HAD trouble on 15, 16 and 17, bogeying all three. She two-putted the par-three 16th, and salvaged a bogey with a 16-foot putt at the par-five 17th after hitting her tee shot into the woods. A tree stopped her tee shot from sailing further from the hole at the par-three 17th, where her first putt rimmed the cup before she managed a third-straight bogey.

Lauer grabbed a brief lead at 17 by hitting her tee shot to the top fringe and two-putting. Her first putt came up six feet short, but she sunk the second to make par.

After the long delay, Repasky went to the 18th tee determined. "I didn't see anything of what happened (at Lauer's controversial eighth hole)," Repasky said. "I didn't get involved."

She had been in playoffs in the O&E tourney before, winning twice — both times for second place. This time, it was for the title.

Other flight winners were Debra Horning of Birmingham, who fired an 84 to claim top honors in the first flight, and Dora Abdoe of Livonia, the second flight champion with a 104.

Cheaters can't ever finish 1st

THE CLOUDS CLEARED, the sun breaking through the overcast yesterday afternoon after rain had threatened the Observer & Eccentric Women's Golf Tournament all morning.

It never materialized, but a storm broke moments after the last threesome completed play in the championship flight.

Ann Lauer, last year's winner, missed a putt for par at the 18th hole by an inch. That gave her a 79, putting her in a tie with Goralyn Repasky for first.

Not so, claimed a pair of golfers — Julie Sproul and Kathryn Herford — who played with Repasky. Sproul and Repasky's coach, Lynn Waldecker, both said they saw Lauer kick the ball from behind a tree at the eighth hole and not take a penalty for it. Herford then said she spotted Lauer picking up the ball and moving it back.

"I turned to Lynn and said, 'Did you see that?'" Sproul said. "I asked Tom (Welsh, assistant golf pro at Whispering Willows) what he would do in my place, and he said he'd report it. I'm just trying to protect the field."

Lauer denied kicking the ball or touching it. She said she even hit the ball left-handed because the tree was in the way.

WHAT IT BOILED down to was a "their word against mine" argument — three people claiming Lauer cheated, and Lauer saying she didn't. Welsh couldn't disqualify Lauer unless the protest was lodged by someone in Lauer's threesome. It wasn't, so the playoff ensued.

Repasky, three times a runner-up in the tournament, won on the first extra hole. For Lauer, the tournament ended earlier. She was devastated by the controversy, sobbing to her mother. "They expect me to play after this!" as she awaited a decision on whether there would be a playoff or a disqualification.

Lauer's first putt on the playoff hole assured Repasky's victory — the ball rolled 12 feet past the cup. Repasky two-putted, and the title was hers.

THERE WASN'T much in terms of prizes at stake to coax someone to cheat — \$25 and a plaque. So why would anyone?

Competition is the culprit here. Winning. People do ugly things to finish on top.

Did Lauer kick the ball? Or were the three people (all friends of Repasky's) who said they saw her touch the ball — from a distance of better than 25 yards — mistaken?

It's an answer that may never be known. There are so many other factors to consider. For instance, those who played with Lauer in last year's tournament had many a kind word to say about her. They were among her accusers this year. Did that have an impact on what happened?

Make no mistake. There is no friendship kindling between Lauer and Repasky. After the championship had been decided, Lauer said Repasky had made a disparaging remark to her on the tee about cheating.

RULES ARE TOOLS, guidelines for everyone to follow if the game is to be played fairly. If Lauer did indeed kick the ball, then put it back "after she was discovered" as her accusers claim, did she take undue advantage?

Was this a controversy that should have happened?

In my opinion, no. Lauer may have kicked the ball, perhaps accidentally or out of anger. If she then put it back, where's the advantage? (Waldecker contended Lauer "didn't hit the ball left-handed" from behind the tree, as Lauer claimed.)

I believe other, more essential things were at stake than an argument over did she or didn't she, with the accompanying finger-pointing. The two best golfers were tied. Let them decide it, on the course, not in the rule book.

THAT'S WHAT happened, ultimately. Welsh did an outstanding job, calling John Molenda, tournament chairman for the Michigan PGA, and Larry Startzel, golf pro at Country Club of Lansing, and a rules expert. They agreed that Welsh could not DQ Lauer unless someone from her own threesome lodged a protest.

It's always sad when such a dispute arises in a sporting event. When it does, everyone suffers. The conflict here claimed both Lauer, who will have to live with that stigma, whether it is just or unjust, and Repasky, who won anyway. Indeed, Repasky finished just a shot off the tournament record, set in 1975 by her coach, Waldecker.

It's a victory that shouldn't be tarnished. Rules govern the game, not the people.

DID LAUER cheat? Did she kick the ball? I can't be certain, but I don't think it matters. Playing well, achieving personal goals and challenges is what counts. Anyone who cheats will never reach them.

Ask if Lauer took unfair advantage (if she did move the ball). If not — and I don't think she did — then play on.

Don't let a win-at-any-cost attitude pervert your perspective of the sport.

One final, ironic note: The tree Lauer was behind at No. 8 was a hazard. She was allowed a one club-length drop.

Lauer didn't know that, which was to Repasky's advantage — fair or otherwise.

U-M's strength: wide receivers

By C.J. Rlsak
staff writer

There is nothing typical in this year's edition of Wolverines.

That's not to say coach Bo Schembechler's University of Michigan football squad won't log another season of lopsided wins. But it's not as certain as in the past. For the second straight year, the Wolverines may not be atop the Big Ten come season's end.

The reasons were laid out plainly enough by Schembechler at U-M's media day Saturday. In simple terms, the Wolverines lack proven performers at key offensive positions.

Indeed, that inexperience could make U-M's positions of strength ineffective.

OFFENSIVELY, the Wolverines are loaded on the offensive line and at receiver. But their quarterback is virtually untested in game conditions and the team's top running back — Rick Rogers, who gained 1,004 yards last season — may be academically ineligible.

Can a host of inexperienced runners fill Rogers' shoes?

And can Jim Harbaugh, a junior with five pass attempts in his varsity ca-

reer, be counted on to get the ball to his veteran corps of receivers?

Vince Bean says yes to both. Bean heads the list of returning veterans at receiver. The fifth-year senior from Southfield snagged 39 passes for 412 yards and three touchdowns last year. His career totals are 64 receptions, 1,069 yards and five TDs.

"We've got a ton of running backs," said Bean. "That won't be a problem."

"I think (Harbaugh) throws better than Steve (Smith, Michigan's quarterback last season). Especially since Steve's shoulder was hurting a lot of the time (Harbaugh) likes to throw."

THAT MAKES the always optimistic Bean anticipate an even more productive season at split end this year.

"My goal last year was to catch at least 30 balls," he said. "I was pretty happy from that standpoint, although I could have caught more."

"This year I'm going for 45."

Bean foresees an increase in opportunities that will allow him to increase his production by more than 50 percent. "I think we're going to throw that much more," he said, then added, "But it's up to the man (Schembechler). He likes to run a lot."

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Paul Jokkech
U-M grid rookie



Vince Bean
U-M grid veteran

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