

Getting Physical Puts Coles In LPGA Lead

By RAY KIENZL, Press Sports Writer

WHEELING, W.Va. — Everybody has an opinion about the Speidel golf course in Oglebay Park here and while their opinions may differ, one thing they seem to be in accordance about is that it is a physically demanding course.

But if they had to walk every step of the way in the West Virginia Classic, if they didn't have carts to transport them uphill to the tees at the 15th, 17th and 18th holes, Janet Coles might have more than a one-stroke lead going into the second round today.

Coles is a physical fitness buff. She runs 3 to 5 miles a day. At UCLA, where she played basketball on a team with Ann Meyers, perhaps the greatest woman basketball player of all time, she graduated with a B.S. in kinesiology, her thesis a concentrated study of the differences in muscular activity in the male and female golf swing.

"This course can take its toll, but the only thing that affects me is weather," Coles said after shooting a 3-under-par 34-35-69 on a muggy day yesterday. "The pro-am was worse because we had to walk all the way. But when I walk up a hill, I recover quickly."

Apparently physical fitness doesn't matter as much in other LPGA tournaments. In her sixth year on the tour, Coles has won only once, back in 1978, her sophomore year.

Now here she is, taking a stab at her second win and when she looks behind her

she sees three women who have won a total of two tournaments among them, both this year. They are Kathy Postlewait and Cathy Morse, who won for the first time this year, and Alice Miller, a tall fourth-year pro who appears headed toward her best season. All three shot 70s, Miller with the help of an eagle at the No. 5 hole, one of four scored at the 495-yard dogleg par-5.

Coles came within a foot of sinking a 3-iron shot for an eagle at the 375-yard No. 3 hole, but it was her only bogey that she thought might have kept her round together. It happened at the No. 9 hole, where her approach went over the green, the ball coming to rest near a communications box.

"I gave the box a kick and it seemed to be in pretty tight. Usually you can pull them out easily," she said. "We had to wait about 20 minutes for a ruling and then he (an LPGA official) pulled it out easily. I took some razzing about that for a while."

"We had to let a group go through us and that was good because the gallery behind us was big (it was following Jan Stephenson and Beth Daniel) and that put it in front of us. It was better in that respect. I like to look at the positive side."

She bogeyed No. 9, but got that back with a 10-foot birdie putt at No. 10, then reeled off eight consecutive pars.

"I've been working hard, but this is the last of six straight weeks and I'm tired," she said. "When I get tired, I get edgy. I like to think this is my week, but I've got to make it my week."

Postlewait, one of the losers in a five-woman playoff won by Hollis Stacy last year, also likes to think it might be her week.

"I like the golf course, I always have," she said. "You have to think on it. You don't get level lies all the time, but I'm one of those people who makes things happen if I like a golf course."

She also showed why she won the LPGA putting championship last year when she birdied Nos. 7, 8, 10 and 11 and hit the cup on a birdie attempt from 50 feet at No. 9.

"I played steady while she played birdie-bogey," said Miller, who was paired with Postlewait. "I've been hitting the ball better, I've learned to be patient. I had a feeling I was going to have a good round. The putt at No. 5 was the putt I needed."

Morse has been on and off the tour since the first month of the season, struggling with what she called "personal problems." She wouldn't say what they were but she noted:

"I'm playing golf for a living, it's my career, but I found it's not everything in the world. I was putting a lot of pressure on myself. When I came back out, I didn't put pressure on myself. I'd bogey the first two holes, then I'd shoot 1-under-par."

"Winning has helped. I know what I can do under the gun, under pressure. There are a lot of girls who have never won because they've never been there before."

That's why the girls who have won in the past keep on winning. They don't fear winning. Some of the top players out here don't hit the ball as well as some who don't win. But they know how to save pars.

From the second through 12th holes, Morse played 5-under-par golf.

"I was trying to set a goal," she admitted. "I was thinking about making two more birdies. I pretended I wasn't doing so well. But the three-putt at the par-5 (No. 14) hurt and I had three lip-outs after that."

And if Janet Coles hadn't two-putted so well from 35 and 40 feet on the back nine — "Anytime you two-putt these greens from that distance, you're doing well," Coles said — Morse might have been tied for the lead going into the second round today.

CHIP SHOTS — Amateur Carol Semple of Sewickley shot her best round at Speidel, a 1-over 73, but it would have been 1-under if her drive for a birdie at No. 5 hadn't hit a tree and get lost in the woods. The resultant penalty stroke cost her a double-bogey. Her putting kept her round low: An 8-footer for par at No. 12 and putts of 12 and 10 feet at 13 and 14 for birdies ... Robin Walton went out in a 4-over 40, then began the back nine 3-3-3-3 (par is 4-3-4-4) en route to a 32 and 72.

Martha Hansen, playing in the lead twosome, shot a 71, her first under-par round in 10 weeks and only her fourth this season ... Amateur Gina Piatt of Washington had an 83 and blamed it on her putter ... Not everybody likes Speidel. Lynn Adams after shooting a 75: "Somebody ought to take a stick of dynamite to this course. And I'm sure one stick would be enough."



UPI Telephoto

Janet Coles tries to coax putt in.