



Mari A. Schaefer, The Arizona Daily Star

Laura Davies drops her ball after landing in the water on No. 16

Walton takes LPGA lead

Former ASU golfer ties tourney's 36-hole record

By Tom Foust
The Arizona Daily Star

One of the good rounds that has been bottled up inside Robin Walton got loose yesterday.

The former ASU golfer shot a 64 to jump to a three-stroke lead in the \$300,000 Circle K LPGA Tucson Open at Randolph North.

While first-day leader Laura Davies was trying to jump start a putter that went dead, Walton, a non-winner in nine years on the Tour, is at 11-under-par 133, which ties the tournament's 36-hole record. She shot 69 Thursday.

"It's fun to play good," said Walton, 32. "I've felt like I've had some good rounds bottled up inside of me."

Davies, the rookie from England, shot 74 after a 63 had put her on top by four strokes Thursday. She slipped to third, a stroke behind Patty Sheehan.

Sheehan, a regular in the LPGA's top 10 for the last six years, has a 136 total after shooting a 68 that was a carbon copy of her opening round.

Sherril Turner and Janet Coles both shot 66 and are in fourth place at 138 going into today's third round on the 6,243-yard, par 35-37-72 municipal course.

Sally Little, who started the day in second at 5-under, dropped to a 76 after starting the day with bogeys on three of the first four holes.

After yesterday's play, the field of 144 was cut to the low 70 and ties. It took a score of 5-over-par 149, and 80 players survived the cut. They will continue the 72-hole tournament at 8:45 a.m. today.

The most notable casualty was defending champion Betsy King, who shot 75-78 — 153. That could be bad news for the field in Phoenix next week. A few weeks ago, King missed the cut in Hawaii and won the next event, the Kemper Open, which is played just before this tournament.

Others who are out include last year's Rookie of the Year Tammie Green, and veterans Jane Geddes, Marlene Hagge and Donna Caponi.

Still alive are former Tucson champions Jan Stephenson at 142, Nancy Lopez at 144, Amy Alcott at 148 and Penny Pulz and Tucsonan Chris Johnson at 149.

Second-round leaders

Robin Walton	69-64—133
Patty Sheehan	68-68—136
Laura Davies	63-74—137
Janet Coles	72-66—138
Sherril Turner	72-66—138

Others

Jan Stephenson	73-69—142
Nancy Lopez	71-73—144
Cindy Rarick	75-72—147
Amy Alcott	73-75—148
Chris Johnson	74-75—149

★ Marlene Hagge is still having fun after 38 years. Page 5C.

Stephenson's 69 was one of the day's better rounds. She opened with 73.

Two other Tucsonans, Cindy Rarick and Anne Kelly, stand at 147 and 149, respectively.

Walton was on ASU's national champion golf team as a freshman in 1974-75. She transferred to the University of Washington for her senior year. Since turning pro in 1979, she has won nearly \$250,000, but the closest she has come to victory was a sudden-death playoff loss to Geddes in last year's GNA/Glendale Federal Classic.

She tied for 32nd and 46th in the first two tournaments this year, but has missed the last two cuts.

"There is a fine line between playing well and missing the cut," she said after yesterday's eight-birdie performance.

"I have been striking the ball pretty well. I've been inside of eight and 10 feet lots of times this year, but I haven't cashed in. When you don't take advantage of your opportunities and then all of the sudden you have a couple of bad holes...it's a fine line."

She didn't have any bad holes yesterday. The 133 equals the record set by Pat Bradley in 1986 on rounds of 65-68. Bradley also set the 54-hole record of 11-under 205, but Pulz won the tournament with a 12-under 276.

Walton's longest birdie putt yesterday was 18 feet. The rest came on putts of eight-to-12 feet. The closest she came to trouble was on the par-4 17th when her tee shot strayed. But she punched a five iron

to within eight feet of the pin. "It rolled right by the hole and I thought it was going in," she said.

Walton said that she has been working on the mental aspect of her game.

"I'm trying to discipline myself to dealing in the present tense, instead of looking back," she said. "I'm trying to play like the hole is bigger than the ball instead of the other way around."

The only difference between Sheehan yesterday and Sheehan Thursday was the fact that she got it all at once yesterday with five straight birdies on holes 16, 17, 18, 1, and 2. She played the back nine first. The birdie string came right after she three-putted from 40 feet for a bogey on the 152-yard, par-3 15th.

She hit 15 greens, one fewer than Thursday, and her longest birdie putt was 30 feet.

"I didn't feel like I was in that great a position," she said. "After the streak I felt like I could make every putt, but I didn't."

"I'm very happy with the way I'm hitting the ball and putting," she said. "I'm putting better than last year. Last year, I didn't hit it well or putt it well."

Although she has won 17 tournaments and over \$1.5 million since turning pro in 1980, she hasn't won since 1986 and that has disappointed her. She said her goal is to make the Hall of Fame, and this year she wants to be in the Top 10 as many times as possible.

So far this year she has won the Sarasota Classic, tied for third in the Mazda Classic and tied for seventh in Hawaii. She didn't enter the Kemper.

She credits her fast start to taking more time off between seasons, and not practicing until a week before the first event.

"I feel like the old Patty Sheehan is back," she said.

Davies said that as hot as her putter was Thursday, it was as cold yesterday. She made only one birdie all day, on the 458-yard 18th (the ninth hole of her round). She hit the green with a driver and a 156-yard 9-iron shot.

"I hit the ball straighter than I did Thursday," she said. "I had loads of birdie putts, but I didn't make them. I could have made birdie on the first four holes."