

Europe builds a lead on American soil

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Associated Press

PARKER, Colo. — Europe took an important step Friday toward winning the Solheim Cup on American soil.

Carlota Ciganda of Spain salvaged an unlikely par from a hazard on the par-5 15th hole and kept her and Suzann Pettersen from falling behind. Pettersen won the next hole with a birdie, sending them from 2 down at the turn to a 1-up victory in a pivotal fourballs match that staked Europe to a 5-3 lead.

A long day at Colorado Golf Club ended with Stacy Lewis, on the losing end of that match, getting into a heated discussion with an official over the use of a laser by the official to determine the right drop. At one point, Lewis threw her hands in the air. Along with using a laser, Lewis was upset with the length of the chaotic ruling.

The laser was used to make sure Ciganda's options would be equal distance from the hole.

"Part of the problem we had with it was the rules official lasered the flag and made it public information. So he gave them a number," Lewis said.

That was a moot point, however, when Ciganda eventually dropped from an entirely different spot. She hit her fourth shot just off the green and holed a 15-foot putt right when it looked as if the Americans would take the lead.

"The explanation was about as bad as the ruling, I thought," Lewis added. "I don't think it was correct. It took way too long. It killed the momentum of our match. It killed the momentum of the

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matches behind us and it's just not what you want the rules officials to ever do."

It was a tough day for Lewis, coming off a Women's British Open title at St. Andrews.

Lewis struggled with the pace of lightning-fast greens on the front nine as she and Lizette Salas fell too far behind to catch up in morning foursomes. Lewis played with another U.S. rookie, Lexi Thompson, who twice squandered good birdie chances late in the fourballs.

Lewis is 1-5 in the Solheim Cup.

Pettersen and Carolina Hedwall led the European charge by winning both their matches. Pettersen, playing in her seventh Solheim Cup, drilled a fairway metal into 20 feet on the 16th hole that set up Beatriz Recari for the eagle putt to take charge in a foursomes match. In the afternoon, it was Pettersen's 7-foot birdie putt on the 16th — after Thompson three-putted for par — that gave Europe the lead.

Hedwall was part of what European captain Liselotte Neumann called her "Swedish Vikings" to lead off the warm, sunny opening session south of Denver. Hedwall and Anna Nordqvist finished the front nine with two birdies to build a 3-up lead and they never let Lewis and Salas any closer.

Angela Stanford's overall record dropped to 3-9-3 as she lost both her matches — with Brittany Lang in the morning and with rookie Gerina Piller in the afternoon.

The day was not a total loss for Meg Mallon's squad.

She was scrutinized for taking Michelle Wie as a captain's pick. Wie's superb short game combined with Cristie Kerr making big putts early as they disposed of Catriona Matthew and 17-year-old Charley Hull, 2 and 1, in the final match. The Americans picked up another point in the afternoon behind Lang and Lincicome, with Lang holing a bunker shot on the 14th hole to

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give her side control of the match.

In the morning, the lone American point came from Morgan Pressel and Jessica Korda, a 20-year-old rookie who had a most unusual start.

Korda described the opening tee shot as “very scary,” and the rest of the first hole as simply surreal.

After a breakfast of milk and cereal, she was munching on a banana down the first fairway when she became nauseous. She walked over to the side of the fairway and threw up, news that spread quickly across the expansive course and gave her teammates a moment of levity.

“After I got past the first hole, I was pretty OK,” added Korda, whose 7-foot par putt to halve the 16th hole clinched the match.

Thompson, another rookie, stole a page from Bubba Watson at the Ryder Cup when she asked the crowd to crank up the noise as she hit the opening tee shot. Thompson smashed one on the 635-yard hole and with help from the mile-high air, reached the green in two.

That was the highlight. Even with Ciganda scrambling out of the hazard, Thompson was just short of the green in two on the 15th. She hit a poor pitch some 18 feet from the hole and missed the birdie putt. On the next hole, Thompson three-putted from the back of the green or par, badly missing the birdie putt from 5 feet.

Europe also had the lead after the opening day two years ago in Ireland and went on to win the Solheim Cup. This is the largest lead it has had on Friday since 5-3 at Crooked Stick in 2005. The Americans came back to win and still have never lost the cup on home soil.

That might be tested this week in Colorado.

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WYNDHAM CHAMPIONSHIP

GREENSBORO, N.C. — PGA Tour rookie Patrick Reed shot a 6-under 64 to take a 1-stroke lead over John Huh after the second round of the Wyndham Championship.

With wife Justine serving as his caddie, Reed had an 11-under 129 total at Sedgefield.

Huh had the best round of the day — a 62. John Deere winner Jordan Spieth was 9 under after a 66. Spieth is a PGA Tour rookie and Huh is in his second year.

Charlie Wi, Bob Estes, Rory Sabbatini, Brian Harman, Jim Herman and first-round co-leader Ross Fisher were 7 under. Wi had a 65, Estes, Harman, Herman and Sabbatini shot 66; Fisher had a 69.

Organizers moved up the third-round tee times today to try to dodge a threat of rain, with players going off in threesomes at the first and 10th tees.

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OPEN

ENDICOTT, N.Y. — Kenny Perry shot a 7-under 65 to take a 1-shot lead after the first round of the Champions Tour's Dick's Sporting Goods Open.

Perry, the Senior Players and U.S. Senior Open winner this summer, had three birdies over the final four holes to surge past Bart and Brad Bryant and Joel Edwards.

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Perry's round turned with a brilliant shot at the par-5 12th hole. He holed a 6-iron from 187 yards for eagle. He also had six birdies to go with one bogey, hitting 15 fairways and putting just 26 times.

Esteban Toledo, Jeff Freeman, Rick Fehr and Russ Cochran were tied for fifth at 67 as more than half the field broke par at the short-and-narrow En-Joie Golf Club under nearly ideal scoring conditions.

U.S. AMATEUR

BROOKLINE, Mass. — Australians Brady Watt and Oliver Goss advanced to the U.S. Amateur semifinals along with Canada's Corey Connors and England's Matt Fitzpatrick, marking the first time that an American has failed to reach the final four.

Watt, a co-medalist in stroke-play qualifying, had a dramatic 1-up victory over 17-year-old Scottie Scheffler of Dallas. Scheffler, the U.S. Junior Amateur champion, had a hole-in-one on the par-3 seventh and trailed only once — when Watt made a 5-foot par putt to win the match on the 18th hole.

Today at The Country Club, Watt will face Goss — a 5-and-3 winner over Brandon Matthews of Dupont, Pa. Fitzpatrick, trying to become the first English winner since 1911, beat Adam Ball of Richmond, Va., 4 and 3; and Connors topped co-medalist Neil Raymond of England 5 and 3.