

Two 69s share girls first round lead

Chelsea Mocio, buoyed by an eagle 3 on the par-5 12th hole, birdied Nos. 16 and 17 to card a three-under-par 69 at Rockwood Golf Course to gain a share of the lead with Kelsey Kirkpatrick of Golden, Tx., after Tuesday's (July 17) first round of the Fort Worth Girls City Junior Golf Championship. They lead by three shots over Katy Ward, a 17-year-old senior at Aledo High School, and Victoria Vela, a 16-year-old from Mansfield.

Although a record 110 had entered the tournament, there were 25 no-shows.

Mocio, a 15-year-old Arlington Heights sophomore, is coming off a recent victory in Lewisville.

Kirkpatrick, 16, said she is competing in the tournament for the first time to help her prepare for four three-day American Junior Golf Association tournaments she has scheduled in Chicago, Tennessee, Lubbock and Austin.

It was Kirkpatrick's first time to play Rockwood and she rebounded from a double-bogey on the ninth hole to card her 69. She played the back nine in 3-under with birdies on 12, 14 and 15.

Defending champion Prisela Campbell also had trouble in the par-4 ninth when she hit her second shot over the green near the putting green, which was deemed to be out of bounds. She was a little miffed at the ruling because there were no out-of-bounds markings or any rule on the scorecard that designated that being near the putting green was out of bounds. But that was the ruling and by the time she finished, she had carded a triple-bogey 7.

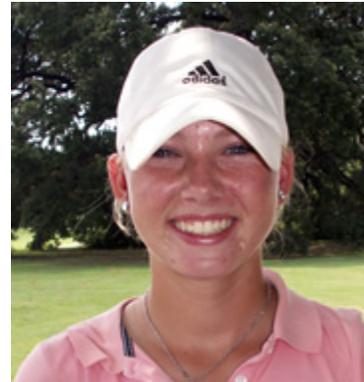
But she said the misfortune ``pumped" her up and she birdied the 10th hole, and went on to finish with a 74, which she considers still in the middle of the hunt in the three-day tournament. Campbell was donning a hat in honor of her father, who shocked her family when he died the second day of the tournament last year. She continued on, as she knew her father would have wanted because he had taught her to play. Campbell, who usually doesn't wear a hat, said she will wear it every day of the tournament.

The second round is at Meadowbrook Golf Course Wednesday before finishing at Shady Oaks Country Club.

Mocio did well as a 14-year-old last year when she finished in the top 10, and said a summer of working on her short game has helped boost her confidence.

Mocio said she started off ``OK" after missing a 4-foot birdie putt on the par-5 first hole. ``I just tried to play consistent all day and make a few birdies coming in."

Kirkpatrick said she has played in several tournaments across Texas, but is venturing out of state this year for AJGA competitions.



Chelsea Mocio, 15, shot a 3-under 69 to share the first-round lead in the girls championship.



Kelsey Kirkpatrick, 16, is from Golden, TX., and is making her debut in the city championship.

The main thing, she said is "getting her head straight," when playing. The mental side of the game has been the worst "club" in her bag, but she said she has worked hard with her father to change her attitude.

"I think that's the reason I wasn't playing very good at the beginning of the summer. But right now I'm getting back..." she said.

Campbell, trying to become the first player to win consecutive titles since Stephanie Dukes in 1998-99, said she was playing OK and at one time was one-under on the front. Then the triple-bogey momentarily stunned her. "But I got pumped up (for the back nine)." She birdied two of the opening holes on the back nine to help keep in contention. "I just started playing a lot better on the back nine."

She said her putting was the strongest part of her game, and "I just made a couple of mental mistakes."

Even though Campbell said she has struggled early in the summer and has played few tournaments as she prepared to defend her championship and for her collegiate career at TCU.

"I will be really, really, really disappointed if I don't win," she said. "This is a large tournament, and I would love to win again. Of course, you can't win them all."

Mainly, she hopes she can get past a course she "hates" when she plays Meadowbrook on Wednesday. "I've played it a lot of times, and I don't know why, but I just don't like it."

Katy Ward, 17, said she had a "double on 14, which kind of hurt."

"I made one really great par save, about a 20-footer on 17," said Ward, who said she has been improving this summer after a shaky start.