
2006 CN Canadian Women's Open Recap

2006 Results

Cristie Kerr stuns Angela Stanford to win the CN Canadian Women's Open -

London, ON (CP) - The sun had dipped below the towering trees at London Hunt and Country Club as Cristie Kerr stood on the driving range preparing for a playoff that would never happen.

Even when the nearby crowd groaned as Angela Stanford made a three-putt on the final hole to give Kerr the CN Canadian Women's Open, Kerr didn't believe she had completed a comeback from eight behind until she was in the arms of fiancé Erik Stevens.

"I just said, 'I can't believe it. I can't believe it.' It's been that kind of day."

Stanford talked about how difficult it is to win an LPGA event and then went out and showed how easy it is to lose one.

Kerr came out of the pack to catch the third-round leader with a 7-under 65 Sunday to win the \$1.7-million US event. The eight-stroke comeback was the largest on the LPGA this season.

"I played a perfect round of golf today and that's what it took," said Kerr, who earned \$255,000 for the win.

Her 65 was eight strokes better than the fourth-round average, but she was still trailing by a shot when it was all over.

Stanford then made bogey from the sand on the tough par-3 17th - she was 0-for-4 on sand saves in the final round - before bogeying 18 for a 74 that left her alone in second place. It was a shocking finish for a player who led here from very early in the first round until the 72nd hole.

"All day long I felt I had control," said Stanford, who started the day with a four-shot lead. "I felt like I was in a good spot all day long."

"I never really thought (I had lost control) until 17."

It was déjà vu for the duo.

Stanford also surrendered a four-shot lead to Kerr in the final round of the Franklin American Mortgage Championship in May. On that day outside Nashville, Kerr had a 67, while Stanford shot a 73.

She came from even further behind to secure her eighth LPGA victory and second this season. Kerr was once considered a failed prodigy after joining the tour at age 19 in 1997 and taking 136 events to get her first victory, which came at the 2002 Longs Drug Challenge.

Clearly, she's learned to win since and thinks her story could be a lesson for Stanford, whose lone LPGA victory came three years ago.

"People don't remember that though," Kerr said of her early struggles. "People remember now, today. I think that winning is very much a learned behaviour and I think she should not get down herself."

"I think that she should learn from this."

Kerr's round really got going on the seventh hole, when she made the first of three straight birdies. She played the final 12 holes in 6-under par but her up-and-down from the sand on No. 17 to save par was as big as any.

A large gallery had the chance to see Kerr's splendid round as she was playing alongside fan favourite Lorie Kane of Charlottetown, who shot a 75 and finished in a tie for 16th. Kim Brozer of Red Deer, Alta., was the next best

Canadian in 37th after a 76.

Kane walked off the 18th at London Hunt blowing kisses to the fans and was full of praise for her playing partner.

"What really impresses me about Cristie is that she can pull it out of her hat when she needs to," she said. "She's a very determined young lady and has a great golf game."

"Cristie had it all today."

Kerr's dramatic comeback was only fitting for a tournament that was almost left for dead a year ago and still managed to exceed all expectations here.

The sun shone brightly all week and the fans turned out in droves to cheer on the golfers and get autographs from the always gracious LPGA players.

London Hunt also played like a true championship course, giving players several chances to make birdie but also penalizing them for missed fairways and greens. The scoring average was above par each day.

When CN stepped in to save the tournament last October, this is exactly the kind of event - and dramatic finish - they envisioned.

"We couldn't be more thrilled," said Hunter Harrison, the president and CEO of CN. "We're committed to making this one of the premier events. We're not just a fill-in sponsor."

"We couldn't be more satisfied with how things have come off this week."

Stanford will no doubt arrive in Portland, Ore., for next week's LPGA event with a lump in her throat.

She gave herself several opportunities on Sunday to get some distance on the field, but couldn't find the range with her putter - the club that has probably most held her career back.

Still, it took an unlikely 65 on a difficult golf course for her to lose.

"I didn't really make any mistakes again," said Stanford. Until the final two holes. Kerr knew that was possible because the pins were tucked tight to the edge of the green on both holes. After signing her scorecard and taking a look at the giant scoreboard off the 18th green, the 28-year-old American said, "It's not over yet."

Stanford promptly came through, made two bogeys and buried her head in her hands. Several minutes later she still couldn't believe that Kerr had caught her.