

GOLF

U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

Stark captures first major title

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Maja Stark has won tournaments around the world, but a professional victory in the United States eluded her.

Now she's a U.S. Women's Open champion.

Stark carded an even-par 72 to win the second major of the year by two shots Sunday at Erin Hills in Erin, Wis.

The 25-year-old from Sweden led the championship by one stroke through 54 holes and outlasted World No. 1 Nelly Korda, who got within a shot of the lead before petering out on the back nine.

"I just didn't want to get ahead of myself. I thought there's still a lot of golf left to be played," Stark said. "I just felt like people are going to pass me probably, and I just had to stay calm through that.

"I didn't look at the leaderboards until I was on like 17. I caught a glimpse of it. It was nice."

Stark posted a 7-under-par 281 for the week. Korda (71) tied for second with Japan's Rio Takeda (72) at 5 under, and South Korea's Hye-Jin Choi carded a 68 to claim a share of fourth place at 4 under with countrywoman Mao Saigo (73) and China's Ruoning Yin (70).

Korda had a 2-under front nine to get to 6 under for the championship. Stark was nursing a one-stroke lead over Korda when she birdied No. 11 from 14 feet.

Korda bogeyed the par-3 13th and birdied the next hole, but only after an eagle opportunity slid by.

Stark made a two-putt birdie at No. 14 to get to 9 under and had enough cushion to absorb bogeys at the difficult Nos. 17 and 18, where she missed each fairway.

"You need to kind of think about every shot here," Stark said of the difficult course setup. "Maybe not the tee shot on 10. I think that's fine. But everything else, you've just got to have your brain working for you, whereas like on normal weeks, you can kind of bail out. Here, not really."

Stark has six wins to her name on the Ladies European Tour. One of those, the ISPS Handa World Invitational in Northern Ireland, was co-sanctioned by



Maja Stark hugs her caddie, Jeff Brighton, after winning the U.S. Women's Open. BENNY SIEU/IMAGN IMAGES

the LPGA and earned her a tour card in 2022.

Before Sunday, the highlight of Stark's minimal major résumé was placing second to Korda at the 2024 Chevron Championship. Now, she is just the third Swedish woman to win a U.S. Women's Open after Liselotte Neumann and golf legend Annika Sorenstam.

"It's so cool. They texted me yesterday and just kind of said, 'Bring it home,'" Stark said. "That was already cool to just get those texts. Just looking at all the names on the trophy. I love the U.S. Opens. I'm so happy that it's mine now."

Korda came up short of a would-be

third major victory. She earned her best finish at a U.S. Women's Open and her third top-10 after she missed the cut last year.

"To have that showing last year definitely put a dagger into my heart, but that's just golf," Korda said. "You're going to lose more than you win a majority of the time. I feel like I actually learn a lot about myself and my game and where I need to improve playing the U.S. Women's Open because it does test every part of your game.

"It's also super motivating ... to see where my game's at. Hopefully I can continue trending in the right direction for a long season ahead."

Takeda made an early double bogey in an otherwise solid round to stay close to the top of the leaderboard all day. She tied for ninth at this championship last year in her major debut and followed that with a T2 on Sunday.

"This is a major, of course, and it is a big tournament. So I always thought that I would like to do my best here," Takeda said.

Julia Lopez Ramirez of Spain played in the final pairing with Stark after shooting a 68 on Saturday. She struggled from the outset and finished 1 over for the event after a triple-bogey 8 on the final hole destined her to a score of 79.

PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS

Jimenez prevails in playoff at Principal Charity Classic

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Spain's Miguel Angel Jimenez birdied the final hole of regulation to force a playoff with Denmark's Soren Kjeldsen and Australia's Cameron Percy, then birdied the same hole in the playoff to win the Principal Charity Classic on Sunday at Wakonda Club in Des Moines, Iowa.

"It was hard," Jimenez said. "People (were) playing very well, as you can see."

Jimenez, who shot 2-under-par 70 on Sunday, started the final round with a two-shot lead over Percy. Kjeldsen was lodged seven shots back, but the 50-year-old making his second Champions Tour start fired a bogey-free 63 to take the lead into the clubhouse at 17-under 199.

Kjeldsen owned a one-shot edge when Jimenez and Percy reached the 18th hole, a drivable par-4. Jimenez and Percy lined their tee shots to the front of the green, then two-putted for birdie and a three-way playoff.

The three players returned to the 18th tee, but only

Jimenez produced a solid tee shot. While the 61-year-old Jimenez drove just short of the green to the right – setting up a good angle to the pin – Kjeldsen sliced his drive off the cart path to the No. 1 tee box on the right and the 51-year-old Percy yanked his drive underneath a scoreboard to the left.

Kjeldsen and Percy scrambled to earn pars, but Jimenez calmly chipped within 3 feet and drained a straightforward birdie putt to claim his third title of the year and 16th since he joined the Champions Tour in 2014.

Jimenez's \$300,000 payday increased his 2025 earnings to \$1,813,297, which leads second-place Angel Cabrera by \$375,000.

He celebrated by pulling a cigar out of his bag just off the 18th green.

"The cigar tastes amazing," Jimenez said.

At least one runner-up, meanwhile, didn't walk away with a bad taste in his mouth.

"I played great today, so no regrets," Kjeldsen said. "Miguel is a great champion."



Miguel Angel Jimenez poses with the trophy after winning the Principal Charity Classic at Wakonda Club on June 1 in Des Moines, Iowa.

DAVID BERDING/GETTY IMAGES

Memorial

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Much like on Saturday, Scheffler was content with pars as he played the front nine in 1 under with eight pars.

Griffin (73 on Sunday) led for large chunks of the first three days, but lost a share of the top spot with a bogey on Saturday's final hole. He began Sunday with another bogey, and he was 2 over for the day through 13 holes.

"I'll learn from some of my swings down the stretch," Griffin said. "I'll remember some of the good stuff, and I'll bounce back and get right back to it."

An eagle on the par-5 15th with a 12-foot putt followed by a birdie on No. 16 allowed Griffin to extend the suspense. Then the margin went from two strokes to four when Griffin was stuck with a double bogey at No. 17.

"We battled really hard on the weekend," Scheffler said. "Ben made things interesting down the stretch. Overall, it was a great week."

A week ago, Scheffler tied for fourth



Scottie Scheffler gets a handshake from Jack Nicklaus after winning the Memorial Tournament. ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

place as Griffin won the Charles Schwab Challenge. Scheffler has secured seven consecutive top-10 finishes.

"The guy's relentless," said Sepp Straka, the tournament's third-place finisher from Austria. "He loves compe-

tition, and he doesn't like giving up shots."

Griffin said his putting was costly during the weekend. The runner-up spot didn't seem as rewarding as it would have in previous years.

"I'd take this finish, like, a year ago, two years ago, three years ago," he said. "I'm definitely a little disappointed to not have made it a little bit closer or gotten it done."

Straka (70) was third at 5 under and second-round co-leader Nick Taylor of Canada (73) finished fourth at 4 under. Russell Henley (71) and Maverick McNealy (70) shared fifth place at 2 under.

Brandt Snedeker's 65 was the best score of the final round, moving him to 1 under and into a five-way tie for seventh place.

"I think I probably made 200 feet of putts today," Snedeker said. "I had the putter working. When you have days like that, it's just get it on the green, give yourself a chance."

Also in that cluster at 7 under was Rickie Fowler (73), who qualified for next month's British Open as a result of his finishing spot.

"We're heading the right way," Fowler said. "This week still could have been a lot better, but definitely positive is going over to Portrush. That's one I've wanted on the schedule."