

# golf



# world

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**SUSIE BERNING  
RETAINS  
OPEN TITLE**







# A THREE ROSE WINNER

*With five strokes to spare, Susie Maxwell Berning coasted to her third U.S. Women's Open title, thus becoming the third player in history to successfully defend. And, greeting her at the final green was a cheering crowd and daughter Robin with a birthday present of three red roses.*

By MIKE DANN

• The third time is the charm and Susie Berning savored her third USGA Women's Open title the most. Not that she has won more titles than anyone else, no, because Betsy Rawls and Mickey Wright have four each. And not that she was the first to take back-to-back Opens because Mickey's first two came in 1958 and 1959 and Donna Caponi Young did it just four and three years ago.

"Well, for one, how many times do you win the Open on your birthday?" asked the now 32-year-old Mrs. Berning. Her eyes were still moist from happy tears after an easy five-shot win at the Country Club of Rochester. She had everything she wanted right there Sunday afternoon, the Open trophy again, husband Dale and daughter Robin, birthday and victory roses and \$6,000.

Each win was different for Susie and she'll have to invent another way to win the next time. Married just seven weeks, she won the first by three shots from Mickey Wright in 1968. Two 20-foot putts on the closing holes gave her a sudden win at Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, N.Y., last year. "I'm more excited with this one because I didn't win it on just the last holes, and I wanted this one very much.

"Let me put it this way," she said before the tournament, "if I had my choice between winning the \$25,000 first prize in one of the biggies or the \$6,000 for the U.S. Open, I wouldn't hesitate to say I'd rather win another Open.

"To be the Open winner is the ultimate dream for a golfer. No title tops it. None."

That explains partially why three of Mrs. Berning's nine titles since turning pro in 1964 are U.S. Opens. "It's simple. It's so much different from the regular tournaments we are used to playing in. I have been preparing for the Open for quite some time, only because of what this tournament means to me.

"The Open is a lot of things. It's seeing the ladies of the USGA dressed in blue in their blazers and arm bands, the men of the USGA, the tents—they all make it seem more important. Everyone gets serious all over again and we try our hardest."

Sue admitted before the tournament her chances of repeating were likely

slim. "On a given week—or like last year for me, a given day—it could be anyone's turn." But there were early indications of her steady play. A month before she had won the Heritage Open and had won money in the tourneys she played since. She skipped the week prior to the Open.

"I have to take time off. I can't play week after week. I don't think we ought to have a tournament scheduled the week before the Open. When you play every day, each round means less."

She is playing a bit more this year after shortened schedules the last few years as daughter Robin, 2½, is more able to travel. Susie rarely goes to a tourney without husband and daughter. "I remember before I was married how the single girls would eat with other golfers and talk golf all the time. I have to get away from it sometimes."

For the next month, for instance. "Dale asked me what I wanted if I won the Open and I told him a five-day pack trip in the Sierra Mountains." The Bernings make home in Lake Tahoe, Nev., where Sue plans to spend a lot of time with her family the next month. "We are going back and enjoy the mountains and lakes. I am so anxious about going up there, I can't wait. I want to get some horses and ride up in those mountains and feel at ease."

The vacation was planned before the Open victory, before the tournament when she was less sure of her play. "When I got here the weekend before the start I was worried. I hit the ball very high and there was some wind that made me worry.

"But I was lucky all week. One advantage was that I could reach all the holes in regulation. Some girls get upset on long holes because they can't reach them, but I didn't have that problem.

"We don't play that many fast greens on the tour, and I don't putt slow greens well. But I like these."

Susie admits freely that many of her scoring problems stem from her putting stroke. "I am not a good putter. I always have to work on it." She did two things that helped her green stroke.

"Friday I missed four putts under

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### THREE ROSE WINNER

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two feet, and I was convinced that I needed a lighter putter." For the last two rounds she changed to one that husband Dale had bought for \$5 two months earlier from an Oklahoma City pawn shop for his antique club collection. "I convinced him I needed it."

Next she went back to an old putting style, one she abandoned, oddly enough, just before last year's Open. "It made my back hurt after a couple of months and it will probably do the same if I keep it up for long now," said the petite bombshell who walks the fairways in a stubborn gait. "I stand almost sideways to the ball."

Her isometric stance is open, pigeon-toed and knock-kneed. She plays the ball back and her weight is back and the ball goes in. On Friday with her old stance she hit 15 greens with 38 putts and scored 77. Saturday with new putter and style, Sue hit 15 greens with 31 putts and shot 69. Her four rounds of 72-77-69-72—290 gave her a two-over finish.

"That was weird too. I hit the ball best Friday when I scored my worst total and hit it the worst during my 69, my best scoring round." However weird, she finished five ahead of Gloria Ehret, who charged in the last day with the only subpar round—a 71—and bubbly Shelley Hamlin whose putter let her down the last two days.

"I was surprised that the scoring was not better," said the champion, who had earlier predicted that a score of eight under might be necessary to win. "The course played short the first day, and I had an easy 72. For the last

round, I set a goal of getting back to par for the tournament, but after a couple of holes found that the course played tougher."

Susie played the CCR tough all week, missing only one fairway in four rounds. "But my trap play—if I hadn't got it up and in from five traps the last round, I wouldn't have these," Susie smiled as she held up the three victory roses Robin presented her on the 72nd green. (One for each Open?) She made 16 pars on Sunday, a bogie and birdie offsetting each other for a par 72 round.

"I couldn't get a putt in all day although I putted well," she admitted. "The course played longer and tougher today."

The official card read 6,120 yards, although players were quick to point out that wasn't quite right. "More like 6,400 yards," was common.

A beautiful setting of clubhouse, shop and pool greets visitors to what looks like a lush, level two-hole golf course. The rest of the test comes when the golfers cross a two-lane highway, through some bushes and to the first 16 holes.

"It's like hitting off oriental rugs," said Patty Berg, the wonderful lady who helped start the LPGA and starred for years. Lush fairways, steep hills—many sloping uphill at the driving areas—and some good-sized walks between tees lengthened estimates. Expansive homes dot the out-of-bounds hillsides but the par threes and prevailing winds made the course difficult. Progressively but not easier, the short holes measure 190, 180, 173, 166 and 152. "I don't know who measured the 16th at 152," said Mrs. Berning of the hole that caused her grief through the week. "I stepped it off at 166 and it's the toughest green to hold."

Many complained that high rough and winds made some par fours unreachable, and a common note among the leaders was "I was hitting the four wood and the five wood great." The course was changed, shortened but strengthened, after the Women's Open was last played there in 1953 when Betsy Rawls won a play-off from Jackie Pung after they tied at 302.

Mrs. Pung sent her regrets for this year's Open with an Hawaiian flower (antherium) arrangement that out-attracted the winner's trophy in the clubhouse.

The USGA had fun too, pairing Carol Mann, at 6 ft. 3 inches, with one of the smallest in the field, Mrs. Marlene Streit, the Canadian Amateur champion. And guess who got the tall caddie and the short one? "I wouldn't trade the little darling for anything,"

said Miss Mann of her five-foot servant who could have been mistaken for her two iron. She had a special bag made and didn't lose either in the rough she visited for two days.

A field of 147, 99 pros and 48 amateurs, was paired for the opening round. The weather was warm and practically windless. The question whether an amateur can again win the Open (Catherine Lacoste, 1967) had some helpful light shed on it as amateurs came to the top. At the finish, eight amateurs and 11 pros had scored 74 or better while the top LPGA money leaders suffered.

Cynthia Hill had been best known for her two runner-up finishes in U.S. Women's Amateurs as well as Curtis Cup and World Amateur Team competition, "but I have not won much," said the 25-year-old from Colorado Springs, Colo. "I just wanted to make the cut," said the low amateur in the 1970 Open, after breaking the CCR course record with 68, the lowest score to ever open the Open.

"Well, I was going for 67. That's the Open record." She knew it well because it is held in part by her boss, Judy Bell (1964), and by Margee Masters (1965). Cindy works at The Broadmoor Hotel sports shop and her employers are Miss Bell and Barbara McIntire, runner-up in the 1956 Open.

"It's the greatest round for me ever," offered an elated Miss Hill after seven birdies and three bogies. She had an opportunity to finish with 67, five under par, but bogied the 17th hole when she missed a two-foot putt.

She had it five under early in the back nine but slipped to her second bogie of the day at the 14th. She got it back with a 15-foot birdie putt at 16, "one I wasn't going for; I was just lagging," she laughed. "Then I was playing for pars, but I am still overjoyed. I called Judy immediately and she said, 'Come on, what did you really shoot?'"

Miss Hill was fresh from a lesson from Johnny Revolta at the Evanston CC, in Skokie, Ill., and she planned to call him too. "I wasn't getting the ball in the air last week after I won the Broadmoor Invitational and I went to him. I wasn't getting my heel off the ground and had too much right hand. He'll say I must be getting it airborne now."

Miss Hill appeared to have not only the amateur lead but also three shots on the field until the second-last pairing and Barbara Fay Boddie came in. Mrs. Boddie, 33, was one of the three qualifiers at the LPGA school a month prior, had just turned professional and talked about how well "we amateurs did today. I'm still one at heart," she

*Amateur Cindy Hill just wanted to make the cut and returned a record opening round of 68.*







Happy halfway leader Sharon Miller reopened the Janie Blalock controversy for the press, but Janie, left, was more concerned with the game at hand.

said, tired after her round of 70. This was her first tourney as a pro.

"My husband was in favor of my turning. He's a pro too and I'm going to teach when we get a course. We just got out of running a bar in Shreveport, La. (her home), and are trying to find a course in the area. We figured if I wanted to play competitive golf and work, I would have to turn.

"I'm going to follow the tour the minimum required (six events) because I get homesick so easily."

Mrs. Boddie combined five birdies and three bogies, "but a 10-foot par putt on the 15th was my best putt all day. I was so tired and we were playing so slowly, if I had bogied there, it would have all gone out the window."

Betsy Rawls, playing as she had 20 years ago to win the Open on the same course, and fifth-year pro Sue Roberts also broke par with 71s. Mrs. Berning, Pam Higgins and Mrs. Streit shot par rounds. The top money winners fared less well: Kathy Whitworth, 78; Judy Rankin, 77; Carol Mann, 79; Betty Burfeindt, 80; Sandra Haynie, 78 (WD); Jane Blalock, 78. When word of a challenge match from Sam Snead and Jimmy Demaret (they want to play two from Whitworth, Rankin, Mann and Blalock) reached Miss Mann, she

said, "Sure, they want us because we're playing bad."

The Open erosion effect took over the second round. The top layer of players hit and fell away. Cindy Hill: "I hit a couple of bad shots, a couple of things went wrong, I got fast and jumpy and everything was off"; 79. Barbara Boddie: "The first 10 holes the pressure got to me. I three putted the second hole from 15 feet and the bogies were on me"; 81. Betsy Rawls, 82; Sue Roberts, 81; Mrs. Streit and Miss Higgins, 76, and Susie Berning, 77.

Kathy Whitworth scored two early birdies before a bee sting on the upper lip slowed her. An ice pack brought down the swelling gradually and Kathy had her best round of the week with 74.

Sharon Miller, an athletic redhead who travels to tournaments in a motor home, made four birdies before her lone bogie at the 16th hole and took the early lead that stood up through the day. A round of 69 left her the only player under par.

"I have the yips on long putts, but I didn't let it bother me today. Bruce Crampton's tour caddie has helped me the last few weeks and he started getting behind me on putts when we

were at Atlanta and helped line them up. My caddie here does the same and lines me up.

"I know I can play better than most of the girls out here, but I can't putt. Maybe I ought to get my eyes checked.

"I hit my five wood great today, especially on the par threes," said the 32-year-old Kalamazoo, Mich., native who travels with two motor bikes for hiking trips and drags a Volkswagen behind her motor home to get to the course.

"I came close to giving up the game this winter. I went home and relaxed and it was like starting all over again. I went to South Africa for a month and played a few tournaments."

Pressed further about her frustrations, she said "I just got tired of the hassle over the Blalock situation. I don't think it is fair for me to go out there every week and beat my brains out and play fair when she doesn't. I know many, many people who have seen her, not all of them contestants, who have seen her cheat."

"Well, I just consider the source," answered Miss Blalock.

Amateurs still held five of the top 11 spots, Mrs. Anne Quast Sander of

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# THREE ROSE WINNER

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Seattle, Wash., tied for second at two over par. "I'm happy with my play, but I can't putt. I am hitting the ball better now than I did when I won the (U.S.) Amateur three times." She shared second with Kathy Martin, on the tour for two years and winner of \$1,905 in 25 events, and Shelley Hamlin.

Miss Hamlin was the player-to-finish-well-in-the-last-of-the-field for the day, in the third from final pairing. "A good thing I had lots of friends out there. They kept me awake," said the lively 24-year-old. "I have a new putting style which helped today," she said after a round of 70. "Putting is the key to this tournament. I figured that out before the tournament. There are a lot of girls out there who hit it good, so it will be settled on the greens."

The leaders fell back again on Saturday. Miss Miller bogied six of the first eight holes. Mrs. Sander and Miss Martin offered no fight for the lead, although Mrs. Sander finished the day low amateur at 222. Pam Higgins, four over at the start of the day, birdied the second and fifth to own the early lead at two over. Shelley Hamlin made a start for the lead until her newly-found putting touch disappeared.

Susie Berning finally started her charge to the top with five birdies and two bogies in a round of 69. "The birdie on the (par five) ninth was the turning point. I knocked a drive under a tree, hit it out and had a full wedge shot left into the green. I made a 30 footer for birdie." She used her unique putting technique and new putter.

"I was kind of surprised to see that I shared the lead. I set as my goal to get to par but even then I figured I would still be out of it." She shared the lead with Pam Higgins, who played the entire week with a bad cold. "Actually it was strep throat but now it has sunk to my chest and I don't sound right."

Pam gained a share when Susie bogied the 17th hole. "But I missed a one and a half foot putt on the ninth for birdie. I have been hitting the ball really well for three days, something I don't do too often; and I sure didn't expect to do well with my throat as bad as it was. I decided to slow down my swing. I'm not sure what I'm doing really, but I am doing it well."

No more red numbers on the leader boards, the two were tied at two over par, two ahead of Sharon Miller. "I got it back finally on the 12th. I kept telling myself to slow it down, slow it down and it took me that long to do it right. By then I saw that Susie and Pam had the lead and I said 'Good, let them have it for a while.'"

Shelley Hamlin was another shot back.

The momentum was in Susie's favor after the first hole the final day. Pam Higgins lost a shot to par, and Susie gained a lead she never lost. Pam's last opportunity came on the par four sixth where Pam lay three only three feet from the hole after Susie took a bogie. Pam's putt would have tied them, but she instead three putted to fall two back, missing from 18 inches coming back.

Susie's lead was three shots after nine, at three over par. Sandra Palmer had charged to within two but double bogied the ninth, and only Miss Higgins and Miss Hamlin were within three. Shelley made good birdies at the 10th and 12th and was close to the par five 13th green in two. "I had just hit a career Arnold Palmer type wood out of the rough, but then I got careless. I just mis-hit the wedge and three-putted. I must have been too cocky." Instead of going to four over par, then only a shot behind Mrs. Berning, she was six over.

Gloria Ehret scored the day's only subpar round of 71 with an incoming nine of 34, thanks to three consecutive birdies. "They were unbelievable, but I was still only playing for second place. A few people came up to me and said I needed only one birdie on the last three holes to make it close. They don't know how hard that is. I didn't think Susie would lose it."

"I didn't think I had it won until I found out what Shelley did on the 13th," said Mrs. Berning. "When I didn't birdie the 13th, I felt a little pressure. The birdie on 15 eased me though. I hadn't played 16 and 17 well all week and I had a big enough lead to get through there."

"And with television going, I was thinking of making good swings. I didn't want to make bogies on TV. If we play our best when we are on, maybe we will get on more often."

No one was within five of Susie Berning's best this time.

## IN THE MONEY

Sue Berning	72-77-69-72—290	\$6,000.00
Gloria Ehret	75-75-74-71—295	2,500.00
Shelley Hamlin	76-70-75-74—295	2,500.00
*Anne Q. Sander	74-72-76-74—296	
Pam Higgins	72-76-70-79—297	1,600.00
Judy Rankin	77-72-75-74—298	1,400.00
Mary Mills	74-73-75-76—298	1,400.00
Sandra Palmer	76-72-74-76—298	1,400.00
Janie Blalock	78-76-72-73—299	1,116.67
Sue Roberts	71-81-73-74—299	1,116.67
Mary Lou Crocker	75-78-69-77—299	1,116.66
Sandra Spuzich	75-79-74-72—300	975.00
Carole Jo Skala	78-74-74-74—300	975.00
Margee Masters	74-75-78-74—301	875.00
*Beth Barry	74-74-78-75—301	
Sharon Miller	73-69-78-81—301	875.00
*Mary Budke	77-76-76-73—302	
Susie McAllister	77-75-76-74—302	720.00
Mary D. Horner	75-76-76-75—302	720.00
Kathy Cornelius	74-77-76-75—302	720.00
Murle Breer	76-75-75-76—302	720.00

Marilynn Smith	75-76-75-76—302	720.00
*Liana Zambresky	75-78-75-75—303	
*Jane B. Booth	73-74-77-79—303	
Laura Baugh	73-79-77-75—304	580.00
Amie Amizich	75-78-76-75—304	580.00
Donna Young	78-73-76-77—304	580.00
*Hollis Stacy	77-77-73-77—304	
*Mrs. Marlene Streit	72-76-78-78—304	
Barbara Fay Boddie	70-81-79-75—305	520.00
Kathy Whitworth	78-74-76-77—305	520.00
Jan Ferraris	78-71-78-78—305	520.00
Betty Burfeindt	80-73-74-79—306	490.00
*Cindy Hill	68-79-79-80—306	
Joyce Kazmierski	79-75-78-75—307	470.00
*Carol Semple	73-77-81-76—307	
Gail Denenberg	75-80-75-77—307	470.00
*Brenda Goldsmith	76-76-77-78—307	
Beth Stone	78-75-76-78—307	470.00
Janet C. LePera	77-74-79-78—308	435.00
Clifford Ann Creed	76-79-75-78—308	435.00
Kathy Martin	73-73-82-80—308	435.00
Catherine Duggan	78-77-72-81—308	435.00
Brenda High	77-78-77-77—309	395.00
Andy Fischer	78-76-77-78—309	395.00
Judy Kimball	75-77-78-79—309	395.00
JoAnn Washam	78-76-75-80—309	395.00
Kathy Hite	81-72-78-80—311	370.00
JoAnne Carner	75-75-82-80—312	345.00
Kathy Farrer	78-75-79-80—312	345.00
Mardell Wilkins	78-77-77-80—312	345.00
Sandra Post	78-77-77-80—312	345.00
Betsy Rawls	71-82-84-76—313	315.00
Kathy Ahern	75-78-79-81—313	315.00
Mary Alice Canney	76-79-79-80—314	300.00
Karolyn Kertzman	80-74-85-80—319	290.00
*Mrs. Judy Meister	77-78-84-81—320	
Joyce Deese	78-77-79-86—320	280.00
Mary Bryan	80-75-83-84—322	270.00

## OUT OF THE FINAL 36

156—\*Connie Day, 80-76; Noni Schneider, 76-80; \*Denise Bebernes, 80-76; \*Mrs. Thorne Dempsey, 78-78; Debbie Austin, 77-79; Roberta Albers, 75-81; Carol Mann, 79-77; \*Judith Oliver, 76-80; Sherry Wilder, 76-80.

157—\*Martha Kirouac, 77-80; JoAnn Prentice, 82-75; Mrs. D.F. Chilmann, 76-81; Lenore Beserra, 76-81; \*Amy Alcott, 73-84; \*Dorothy Porter, 73-84; Sally Little, 77-80; \*Janet Aulisi, 76-81; Patty Berg, 76-81; Robyn Dummett, 78-79; \*Lancy Smith, 80-77.

158—\*Lida Fee Kinnicutt, 81-77; Gerda Boykin, 79-79; \*Janet Coles, 76-82; Jackie Evans, 80-78; \*Diane Wilde, 82-76.

159—Ruth Jessen, 77-82; \*Deborah Massey, 80-79; Marlene Hagge, 82-77; \*Cathy Morse, 81-78; Bonnie Bryant, 81-78.

160—Joyce Ann Jackson, 80-80; Pam Barnett, 81-79; Sue Tubman, 79-81.

161—Dorothy Germain, 77-84; Maria Astrologos, 84-77; Renee Powell, 77-84; Janice Campbell, 82-79; \*Jane Mack, 78-83; Cynthia Sullivan, 79-82; \*Nancy Hager, 81-80.

162—Louise Bruce, 78-84; Jocelyne Bourassa, 81-81; \*Mrs. Paul Dye Jr., 79-83; Barbara Myers, 84-78; Susan Little, 84-78; \*Janice Palmer, 80-82; Mary Bea Porter, 80-82; Jerilyn Britz, 81-81; Vivian Brownlee, 81-81; Vivien Saunders, 83-79.

163—Diane Patterson, 77-86.

164—Carla Glasgow, 83-81; Kathy McMullen, 80-84; \*Nancy Porter, 80-84; Debbie Rhodes, 81-83.

165—\*Marga Stubblefield, 82-83; Christl Pastore, 81-84; Chris Repasky, 84-81; \*Elaine Hand, 81-84.

166—\*Julie Greene, 85-81; \*H.B. Duntz, 79-87; \*Susan O'Connor, 80-86; Kathy Postlewait, 89-77.

167—\*Barbara Vetrane, 84-83; \*Therese Rosensteel, 80-87.

169—\*Janet Schulte, 83-86.

170—\*Helen Kirkland, 84-86; Judy Angel, 86-84.

171—\*Deborah Meisterlin, 83-88; Shirley Wester, 87-84; \*Chris Stayton, 81-90; \*Joanne Avar, 84-87; \*Carol Beinbrink, 87-84; Althea Gibson, 81-90; Lorraine Abbott, 84-87.

172—\*Sue Leingruber, 85-87.

173—\*Janice Krna, 86-87; \*Mrs. J.R. Smith, 85-88.

175—Sue Lynn Merrick, 83-92.

WD—Sandra Haynie, 78; Jill Wilhelm, 93; Jane Huntsberger, 80; Helen G. Finn.

\*Amateur.

## PHOTO CREDITS

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