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## Home-course feeling works well for Graceffa at women's classic

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ROCKFORD — Allison Graceffa used her home-course advantage to reach Thursday's semifinals of the Greater Rockford Women's Golf Classic.

"I have experience playing here," Graceffa said after holding off former champion Jordan Hatch 1-up Tuesday at Rockford Country Club. "I figure I have a little one-up on the girls playing here, which probably helped me out on the greens. I did know how to read some of those."

But it took a while for Graceffa, seeded seventh, to get adjusted as the second-seeded Hatch went 4 up through five holes. Upon reaching No. 8, something clicked for Graceffa, who went on a hot streak winning that hole and Nos. 9, 10 and 11.

"I was nervous in the beginning," said Graceffa, who attends the University of Illinois-Springfield. "Match play gets into your head a little bit."

Graceffa wasn't the only player in the championship flight mounting a comeback.

Playing in the same foursome as Graceffa, defending champion Alexis Bennett rallied late to win on the first playoff hole against Freeport resident Nicky Arn.

Bennett, the No. 6 seed, trailed throughout the match against No. 3 Arn. At one point, Arn went up four, but Bennett kept fighting back.

Bennett won her last three holes, but it took Arn's putt to lip out on the final hole to force the sudden-death playoff.

"She had been making a lot of putts all day," Bennett said. "She played great, but somehow I pulled it out."

Arn, the 2007 runner-up, was disappointed she lost her momentum down the stretch.

"I don't know if I was mentally or physically getting tired or what," Arn said. "It's hard trying to keep that lead. She (Bennett) was hitting some good shots and winning some holes here and there, but didn't get a whole lot of momentum going. I kind of waffled, having bad hole after bad hole."

Neither No. 1 seed Brittany Atterbury nor Erin Gorman, seeded fourth, endured late comebacks by their opponents in their matchups.

Atterbury dispatched Taylor Rumble 4-and-2 to move on the semifinals, while Gorman defeated Hui Chong Dofflemeyer 3-and-1.

Atterbury, who lost last year's title on the first hole of a playoff against Bennett, never trailed and closed the match with birdies on Nos. 17 and 18.

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