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Baird Captures Utah Section PGA Championship

By Brady Bingham

With a pinch of his shoulder and an encouraging hug, Josh Bitton hoped to calm down his brother-in-law Matt Baird for the final holes of the Utah Section PGA Championship.

Baird, a 40-year-old teaching professional at Riverside County Club, was right in the thick of the leaderboard. But his patience was running thin, after carding just one birdie and nine consecutive pars to start his final round.

“I just trusted myself. I knew that if I stuck to my game plan and hit good shots, that the putts would start to fall,” Baird said.

Baird’s trust and the pick-me-up from from his brother-in-law, led to an eagle and birdie on two of the final four holes to close out a victory at Toana Vista Golf Club, Sept 15-16. Baird finished the two-round tournament at 9-under-par, two strokes clear of Joe Summerhays and Pete Stone, and earned the first-place check of \$6,000.

In the tournament within the tournament, six players and three alternates qualified to play in the 2016 PGA Professional National Championship, to be conducted June 26-29 at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, N.Y.

After Baird, Summerhays and Stone, Tommy Sharp finished fourth at 6-under-par, Tele Wightman was alone in fifth at 5-under, and Dustin Volk took the sixth and final spot after winning a one-hole playoff over Chris Moody. Moody, Zach Johnson and Shawn Edwards hold the alternate positions.

Steve Schneider, who already holds an exemption into the PNC, won the Utah Section Senior Championship with a two-round total of 3-under-par. Brad Stone collected the Super Senior trophy, after shooting a closing round 69 to finish at 1-over-par for the tournament.

This year’s Utah Section Championship event also featured the first ever Little Vista Par 3 Challenge. More than 50 players competed



in Monday’s pre-tournament contest, in which event sponsors and buy-ins raised approximately \$2,000 for immediate pay-out to the winners.

Kim Thompson claimed the top spot at 3-under, and earned \$450. Mike Propp and Baird finished in a tie for second.

In two days of cold weather, and a touch of rain, in Wendover, the tournament was Baird’s at its conclusion.

“You know what? This feels really good,” Baird said with a huge smile of accomplishment and a double fist pump. “I am in a really good place in my life, with my family and my kids, and I came down here knowing I was hitting it good. So to come out on top is terrific.”

Baird played solid Tuesday, posting an opening

round 4-under 68. The score put him in the final foursome on Wednesday alongside Sharp, Volk and Stone. However, Wednesday’s round — the leaders reversed nines for the final round and started on 10 — tested Baird’s patience.

“I hit a great shot to the green on the first hole, which is 10, and made a nice birdie there. That was a good start,” Baird said.

But Baird followed with nine consecutive pars. Nothing, it seemed, was going his way.

“I hit a good shot, but missed the putt on 11. Then on 14 I had a short little putt that lipped out. That got me a little frustrated,” Baird said. “Then I had an easy birdie putt on 17 that I missed again. That really heated me up.

“But I just said, ‘Keep hitting good golf shots.’”

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Section Championship

At the turn, Baird trailed Sharp by two strokes. But he finally got a couple breaks to go his way.

On hole two, he confidently hit 6-iron into the par 3 and drained the birdie putt. He then hit a solid approach shot on the par 5 third hole to the right side of the green. Two putts later, Baird carded his second consecutive birdie.

Suddenly, Baird was leading the tournament at 7-under, as Sharp carded a bogey on the same par 5.

"I was 215 out (on my second shot to the green) and thought I was downwind," said Sharp, who made 15 pars, only two early birdies, and the disastrous bogey to finish with a final round 71. "I believed I hit enough club to slide it to the back of the green. I thought I hit it good. But somehow, it hit the bank and slid into the water. So I made bogey where I should make birdie and I fall behind."

As fate often plays with leaders of golf tournaments, Baird suffered his own tough break on the very next hole, the fourth.

"I got a really bad lie in the fairway and hit my approach shot up high into the wind and into the bunker," Baird said.

After failing to get up and down, Baird carded a bogey and fell into a tie for first at 6-under.

"I turned to my brother-in-law and said, 'Well I guess that was it.' He came up and pinched my shoulder and said, 'Hey, you don't give up,'" Baird said.

"On the next hole, I left a putt about six feet short and was again feeling pretty discouraged. But he came up and said to me, 'I have a good feeling about this. So knock this in and let's go,'" Baird said. "So I did. and that kind of got me back into it mentally."

Baird credited his brother-in-law's encouragement for keeping him in the mental state he needed for that final charge, which included the tournament-changing shot at the par 5 sixth hole.

Baird hit a brilliant 3-wood approach shot to about 20 feet for an eagle putt.

"The cool thing was ... I was 260 out into the wind ... I was taking some practice swings and for some reason I remembered in 2010 when I won here that I hit the same shot on 17. That really put a great mental thought in my head," Baird said.

"I stood over it and said, just hit it like I did in 2010."

After the shot, Baird let out a mini yelp and turned to give his brother-in-law a high-five.



"When I got up to the putt, I looked at my brother and said, 'I've got this,'" Baird said. "And sure enough I made it."

The putt gave Baird a two-stroke lead, at 8-under, with three holes to play. But he wasn't done, as Stone, who had mounted a great final-round charge, made a tremendous birdie putt on hole seven — the group's 16th hole — to pull back into within one stroke of the lead.

"I wanted to get to 10-under. That was my goal to start the round," said Stone, who posted an eagle on the 17th and followed with a birdie on 18 and then No. 3 to move into contention.

"When I found out we were in the lead, we were on hole 6, and I hate 6. I hate that hole," Stone admitted. "That tee shot just doesn't feel right. I hit it way left, onto another hole. But from there, I made some good swings and gave myself a chance."

But Stone definitely lost the momentum he had gained.

"I played pretty good. For being 2-over after six holes, to finish how I did, I am pretty happy with it," said Stone, who ousted a final round 69.

"Anytime you can make an eagle 3 and birdie 2 coming down the stretch, you've earned it," Stone said. "He (Baird) went out and won it for sure."

"Pete made a great putt on 7, which was our 16th hole," said Baird, admitting he was still worried about Stone or Sharp catching him.

"I turned to my brother and said, 'Hey isn't this fun? This is exactly what we play for,'" Baird said. "I was actually glad to have someone make it on me like that because I knew I was up, but I needed to stay aggressive."

Baird said he got another familiar feeling on the par 3 eighth hole, his second to last hole.

"When we stood up on the eighth tee, it was the same yardage as it was on No. 2. It was the same 6-iron, so I hit it," Baird said. "I hit it great."

Baird then confidently stood up and drained the 12-foot birdie putt to regain the two-stroke advantage into the final hole.

At that final hole, Volk made a near 20-foot birdie putt from the fringe to finish with a frustrating even par 72 on Wednesday. But the putt tied Moody for the sixth and final spot into the PNC.

"I didn't hit it close to many holes. I didn't make many putts. It was tough. But it was a good day though," Volk said. "I haven't been swinging good. I don't play enough."

"I didn't know where I was on 18, I just figured a birdie increased my chances (of qualifying for the PNC)," Volk said. "I knew the other three (in his foursome) had beaten me, so there were three other spots."

But Volk said he feels accomplished to be heading back to the PNC.

"It will be my sixth appearance. I am proud of that," said Volk, who turned pro in 2008. "That was my eighth section championship and I've made it six times."

"I play well here. I don't know what it is. I've just had a lot of success here," Volk said. "I think I am 40-something under par for this tournament. I've won it twice, and taken second three times. I feel good here."

Volk also joked and said, "I guess I need to plan a family trip to New York next summer."

Also planning to head to New York for the PNC is Sharp, who said, "I was reasonably solid. Nothing great, never got anything really going. I never had a good gauge of the speed on the greens. I left everything short."

"I was hard for me to play aggressively. It's hard when you know, that as long as you don't make a major screw-up you can qualify for the PNC. That's what I really wanted," Sharp said. "That's my goal every year, to qualify for the PNC. I am 3-for-3 know."

Top 10 Stories from the Utah Open



By Kurt Kragthorpe

Maybe the good vibes of all those fans cheering for Utahns to win the Siegfried & Jensen Utah Open were used up the previous two years, when Zach Johnson of Farmington and B.J. Staten of Cottonwood Heights rallied to beat a pair of Arizona pros, including 2015 champion Nathan Lashley.

That's the only logical explanation for

what unfolded over the last four holes of the tournament at Riverside Country Club. Trailing by two strokes, Lashley birdied three holes in a row, then nearly sank a birdie chip on No. 18 as he ended up beating Salt Lake City native Jordan Rodgers by two shots to earn the \$21,000 first prize.

Rodgers collected \$15,000 in a nice boost to

his pro career, but he was disappointed to miss a chance to win, and he would have been a very popular champion. The former BYU golfer was playing the Cougars' home course in front of friends and relatives and fought hard to extend the streak of Utah-resident winners, but Lashley overtook him with those three birdies, including putts totaling 80 feet on Nos. 16 and 17.

Feasting on the front

Tied with eventual winner Nathan Lashley as they turned to the back nine Sunday, Jordan Rodgers targeted a 29 on the back nine. Such a score was not out of the question, as it turned out, although Rodgers settled for a 33 that included a three-putt bogey on No. 18, resulting from some inattention after he knew he had lost the tournament.

Lashley, meanwhile, shot a back-nine 31 that included three lip-outs, two from off the green.

Rodgers can look back on several checkpoints in the final round he failed to take advantage of some opportunities, especially on the last four holes. But in reviewing the entire 54-hole event, it becomes apparent that Rodgers could have done more on the front nine Sunday. He started the final round with a one-stroke lead and made only two birdies on the front, enabling Lashley to tie him. Rodgers had played that side in a total of 11 under par through two rounds, while shooting 64-65. He failed to birdie the par-5 No. 5 on Sunday.

2



The Scores Keep Falling

Utah Section PGA incoming Executive Director Devin Dehlin felt validated last summer when the winning score was 16 under par at Riverside Country Club, after many observers suggested to him that the scores would be much lower than they were in the seven years of the Utah Open at Oakridge Country Club. Instead, 16 under almost matched the average winning total from the Oakridge era.

But those other people were only off by one year. The scores fell much lower this year, with four players shooting 16 under or lower, including Nathan Lashley with a 22-under winning total.

In the process, St. George pro Dusty Fielding's closing 62 was somewhat overlooked. Fielding shot a 29 on the front nine with an eagle on the par-5 No. 7. Fielding matched the 62 that his friend Jay Don Blake once shot in the 1980 State Amateur at Riverside, even though he bogeyed the par-4 No. 10 and failed to birdie the par-5 No. 15. His birdie on the 18th hole enabled Fielding to tie for sixth place, while he essentially earned \$3,000 of his \$3,800 check in that round.

Patrick Fishburn, the low amateur, closed with a 64. So did Lashley, who had opened with a 63, while Jordan Rodgers' 65 was the low round Saturday.

3



BYU's Fishburn is Low Amateur

Jordan Rodgers, the Utah Open runner-up, is a classic case of a golfer who showed great improvement as his college career was ending. BYU golf coach Bruce Brockbank can only hope Patrick Fishburn's Utah Open showing is a sign of what's still to come.

Fishburn emerged as the low amateur with a closing 64, shooting 14 under par for tournament and tying for sixth place overall. He finished five strokes ahead of Corner Canyon High School's Rhett Rasmussen, who has committed to BYU, after starting the final round one shot behind him. Fishburn made nine birdies Sunday, while bogeying the par-4 No. 12.

The product of Fremont High School played a full schedule for the Cougars as a freshman in 2011-12, then served a church mission to Nashville, Tennessee. He has three years of eligibility remaining.

In all, 11 amateurs made the 36-hole cut, even though Joe Parkinson and Seokwon Jeon were missing because of their participation in the U.S. Amateur. Eight of those amateurs finished under par for the tournament.



Champions Tour Players Return to Riverside

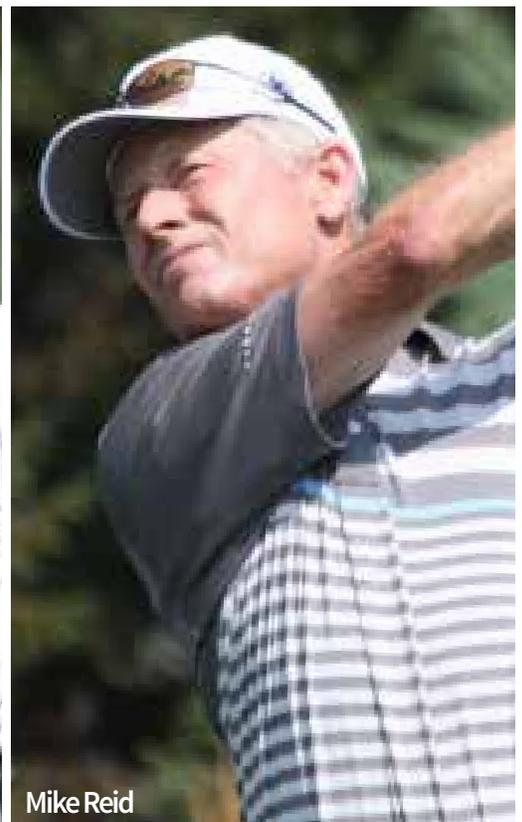
Jimmy Blair's late withdrawal prevented him from joining Mike Reid and Keith Clearwater in a featured threesome for the first two rounds of the Utah Open, but the idea was inspired. Blair would have been reunited with Reid nearly 40 years after they played for a BYU team that finished second in the 1976 NCAA Championships. Clearwater was a member of the Cougars' title team five years later.

The 61-year-old Reid and Clearwater, 55, couldn't deliver that kind of performance that Bruce Summerhays summoned in 2008 to win the Utah Open at age 64. But they played well in the opening round, shooting 69s in the afternoon. Each followed with a 73 to make the 36-hole cut, while tying for second in the Senior Sidebar competition behind Mike Grob of Billings, Montana, who posted a 140 total in the tournament within the tournament. They were the only three senior pros who made the cut, joining amateur Brett Sampson.

Reid and Clearwater were paired together in the final round, with Clearwater's 71 beating Reid's 74.



Keith Clearwater



Mike Reid

Riverside Staff Members Make Their Marks

Playing their home course in the Utah Open creates both opportunity and responsibility for Riverside Country Club assistant pro Chris Moody and teaching pro Matt Baird.

Imagine how many times they were asked about the Utah Open in the buildup to the tournament. They responded well, finishing 1-2 in the Black Clover Sidebar competition for Utah Section PGA members and adding to their winnings.

Moody shot 68-66-69 to tie for eighth place overall and Baird posted 69-68-68 to finish 13th. That was more than a respectable showing. Moody is the section's reigning Assistant Professional of the Year, a tribute to his ability to focus on his primary job, even though maintaining an elite-level golf game also is important to him. Baird also is a great player, and not all teachers can say that.

Black Clover's sponsorship is a tremendous benefit to section members, not just those who finish as high as Moody and Baird did. Moody added \$500 to his regular check of \$2,725; Baird earned \$1,900 plus \$475. But consider Spanish Oaks head pro Ryan Rhees, who made the 36-hole cut on the number and collected \$470. Mix in his \$330 from Black Clover, and that's a decent week's earnings.



Farewell to the Scotts

The traditional awards presentation on the 18th green turned into a closing ceremony, in multiple ways. Chris Stover, president of the Utah Section PGA, honored executive director Scott Whittaker and marketing director Scott Bringhurst as they move into retirement.

Another successful Utah Open served as a tribute to Whittaker and Bringhurst, who have been instrumental in the section's revival of the tournament. Whittaker has led the section staff for 13 years, after a long career as a club professional. Bringhurst became a key component of the tournament after the section took over the operation in 2000, and the title sponsorship of Ned Siegfried and Mitch Jensen has attracted additional support and enabled the tournament to fill eight pro-am fields during the week.

Devin Dehlin, a longtime club pro, golf administrator and section officer and staff member, will succeed Whittaker. Dehlin's appointment will provide a blend of continuity and innovation to the section.



Another Successful Short Game Challenge

8

A unique aspect of Special Olympics Utah's role as the Utah Open charity is how athletes are involved in the tournament operation from start to finish. Selected athletes enjoy being part of the awards presentation on the 18th green every year, when SOUT receives an oversized check from the Utah Section PGA (\$45,000 in this case), but that's not all they do.

Athletes are involved in a variety of jobs to help tournament organizers. They also participate in the Short Game Challenge on Monday afternoon of tournament week. Black Clover's sponsorship took the event to another level this year, providing matching caps to each pair of teammates, a Special Olympics athlete and a media member.

The bonding that occurs over those nine holes of chipping and putting is remarkable. The alternate-shot format makes the partners feel equal, and they're very supportive of one another. It will always be difficult to gauge who benefits more from the event, the Special Olympics athletes or the partners who gain a greater appreciation of these athletes, their love of the game and their determination to succeed while having a great attitude.



Another Busy Week at Riverside

Whenever they attend national events and talk about staging their state open, Utah Section PGA officials evoke considerable surprise by mentioning the Utah Open's eight pro-am events.

Wait. Eight?

It's true. From Monday through Thursday, in the morning and afternoon, Riverside Country Club was filled with teams of golfers. No wonder, then, that administrators tend to think of most of their work being done by the time the actual 54-hole tournament begins Friday morning.

It is a major undertaking to fill the fields of those eight pro-ams with sponsors and their clients, and then to stage the event by providing each pro-am contestant with a first-class experience. The production is a credit to the section staff and to everybody involved with Riverside's operation, including head pro Robert McArthur, superintendent Eric Gifford and general manager Scott Kirkland.

The golf course itself must be maintained at a high level and prepared for tournament conditions by Friday, while accommodating the amateur players during the week. And the clubhouse staff is charged with treating the guests so well that they want to come back. By all accounts, Riverside has succeeded the past two years.

9



Utah Open



Returning to Riverside

When they decided to give other facilities an opportunity to host the Utah Open after a successful seven-year run at Oakridge Country Club, Utah Section PGA officials intended to have a two-year stay at Riverside Country Club.

Those plans changed, via some combination of Riverside's production and a desire for more continuity with sponsors, pro-am players and everyone associated with the event. So the Utah Open will return to Riverside in 2016, followed by a return to Oakridge for a three-year run.

Riverside had not hosted the Utah Open since 1975, before getting a shot at the 2014 event. Renovations of the clubhouse, golf shop and the course itself have created a much different look for Riverside, and the venue has proven to be an outstanding host of the tournament. Credit goes to Oakridge for raising the standards of the Utah Open and making the event attractive to other clubs, and Oakridge will get another opportunity as host, beginning in 2017.

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President's Message

A Championship Season Comes to an End

By Chris Stover, PGA President, Utah Section PGA, Head Golf Professional, Wasatch Mountain State Park CG

Wow! What an end to a great season of golf in Utah. The fall temperatures have been amazing as has the play at three of my favorite events.

First, with Scott Whitaker and Scott Bringham announcing their respective retirements, it was only fitting that the 2015 Sigfried and Jensen Utah Open held at Riverside in August went off without a hitch. With eight full Pro-Ams that were well run and well attended, the Utah Section of the PGA feels extremely fortunate to have such wonderful support from our sponsors. The Utah Open is truly one of the greatest state open championships in the country. The golf at the Open was exciting as the 2009 Champion Nathan Lashley birdied 3 of the last 4 holes and shot -22 under par to pass Salt Lake City's Jordan Rodgers who was vying to be the first person in 81 years to win both the Utah State Amateur and the Utah Open in the same year. And congratulations to Chris Moody who was the low Utah Section PGA member and won the Black Clover side bar purse.

In mid September the Utah Section PGA Championships were held in Wendover

Nevada at the Toana Vista Golf Club. This year's champion was Matt Baird who fired 68-67 for 135 total and qualified for the National PGA Championship. Others who qualified for the national event are Joe Summerhays, Pete Stone, Tommy Sharp, Tele Wightman, Steve Schneiter, and Dustin Volk. Congrats and good luck at our national championship.

Finally, in early October the Utah High School Activities Association and Utah Section PGA held all four Boys' Golf Championships at Soldier Hollow. I can't believe how far high school golf has come since I played in the late 1980s. These young men are so talented, they play without fear and have worked so hard at becoming great.

It takes a lot of help to pull off four separate 36-hole events over four days but the staff at Soldier Hollow, the Utah Section PGA Staff and PGA Professional rules officials, coaches and the Utah High School Activities Association all came together for the good of the game. Thanks to all who took part in the state championships. It truly is one of the things that I am most proud of when I think about

being a PGA Professional.

In the 2A classification, Grand won the team title while Garrett Furubayashi (75-72) of Roland Hall edge Davis Hardy in a 2-hole playoff. In the 3A classification, Park City continued an unprecedented run of 8 Championships in a row while Mitchell Schow (65-66) took home the medalist honors. In the 4A classification, Timpview won the team title while Rhett Rasmussen of Corner Canyon won the medalist honors by shooting (68-65). Finally, in the 5A Class Lone Peak continues to roll, they won the team title and Conner Howe (62-68) of Weber won the individual title by a single stroke over Cole Ponich (68-63) of Davis (see picture). Let that soak in...a one shot victory by posting 130 over a 36-hole stroke play event. Congratulations to all our high school players for all the success they are having.

We hope you are looking to achieve success like some of our other Utah junior golf alumni who are currently having success on the PGA Tour. What a great game we play. Continued success in all you do!

Boy's High School State Golf Championships on Par at Soldier Hollow

By Brady Bingham



5A

Soldier Hollow served as the picturesque host for the 2015 High School Boys State Championships. But few could keep their eyes off the performance of the players during the week of Oct. 5-8, as teams from the 5A, 4A, 3A and 2A classifications battled for championships.

5A

Weber High School sophomore Connor Howe posted perhaps the best round in Utah High School Championship history. Howe's jaw-dropping 10-under 62 on Soldier Hollow's Gold Course during Monday's first round of the 5A championship is believed to be an all-time

tournament record.

Howe, just 15 years old, followed his 62 with a second-round 68 to finish at 130 and collect the individual 5A title. Remarkably, Howe won by just one shot over another 15-year-old, Cole Ponich, who notched a second-round 9-under 63 and finished at 131.

"I'm pumped," Howe said with confidence. "I expected to play well this week, but I don't know that I thought I would do well enough to win by one shot."

After his record-breaking round Monday, Howe said: "I hit three perfect shots on the first hole, so I knew it was going to be a good day. After about

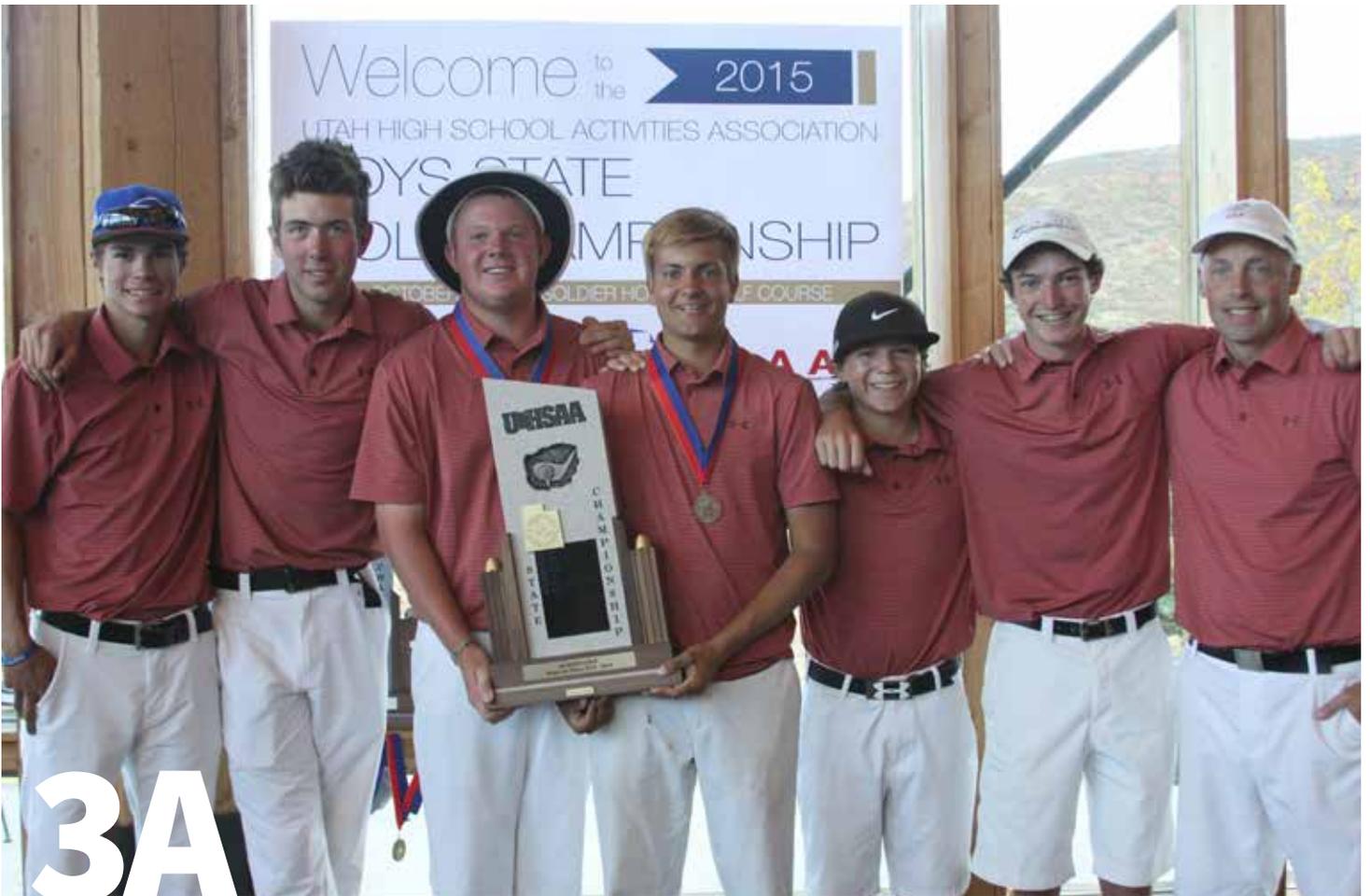
14 holes, I knew I was quite a bit under, so I was kind of hunting for a 59."

After a birdie on the first hole, Howe posted six more birdies and two eagles — on the par 5 eighth hole and the par 5 11th hole. A bogey on 17 was Howe's only blemish.

"I hit my driver perfect (on Monday)," Howe said. "(On Tuesday) I just want to do more of the same, maybe even post another 62."

While another 62 didn't come in day 2 of the championship, Howe played a solid round of golf.

After a birdie on the first hole, Howe recorded a solid front nine — a 4-under 31 — to put him in place for a win.



3A

coach at Corner Canyon. “He’s been close so many time before. He really wanted to prove to everyone that he’s the best in the state.

“So that 65, under the pressure, was a great round,” Tannersaid. “He is one of the hardest workers you will see. He is all golf. He is very committed.”

Lillywhite posted consecutive rounds of 4-under 68 to finish at 136, alone in second place. East High’s Hayden Banz finished third at 138; Skyline’s Blake Tomlinson was fourth at 139; East’s Jeff Black was fifth at 141; Timpview’s John Lillywhite, Orem’s Brock Stanger and Corner Canyon’s Dylan Bloechel tied for sixth at 144. Bonneville’s Carsen Dopp, Olympus’ Zack Neff and Maple Mountain’s Mark Mortensen rounded out the top 10 at 144.

Paced by the Lillywhite brothers — Josh, John and Spencer — Timpview (575) raced to a six-shot victory over East (581) for the 4A team title.

“I am pretty ecstatic. I am very happy for my boys,” said Timpview coach Jeff Ward, fighting back tears of emotion. “It never hurts having three brothers like the Lillywhites. But my fourth scorer, Evan Moody, came up really big two days

in a row.”

Woods Cross finished third in the team race at 587, one shot better than Orem’s 588.

3A

Park City senior Mitchell Schow, as the two-time defending champion, brought high expectations into the 3A Boys High School Championships.

“I expected to shoot 65-65. That was my goal,” said a confident Schow after his first round Wednesday on Soldier Hollow’s Gold Course.

Schow, who committed to play college golf for the University of Utah, took the first-round lead after posting a 7-under 65. He topped Noah Schone, a junior from Pine View High, by one stroke.

Schow followed with 6-under 66 in Thursday’s second round, to finish at 131, five strokes clear of Tristan Gardner of Snow Canyon.

“I feel like I left a few shots out there but I can’t complain,” Schow said despite his 7-under first-round score. “I made a few putts and my ball-striking was good. It was a good day.”

Schow birdied three of his first four holes and

posted nine birdies on the round. Show said he made three or four 20-foot putts, which boosted his round. He also birdied his final hole of the day.

“I feel like every hole is a birdie hole for me out here,” said Schow, adding that he would rather win a team title, but an individual victory would be nice too. “It will be a great competition tomorrow, so we will see how it turns out.”

On Thursday, Schow was 6-under heading into 17, but a bogey curtailed another fantastic round. He would follow with a birdie at 18, just like the day before, to finish the victory.

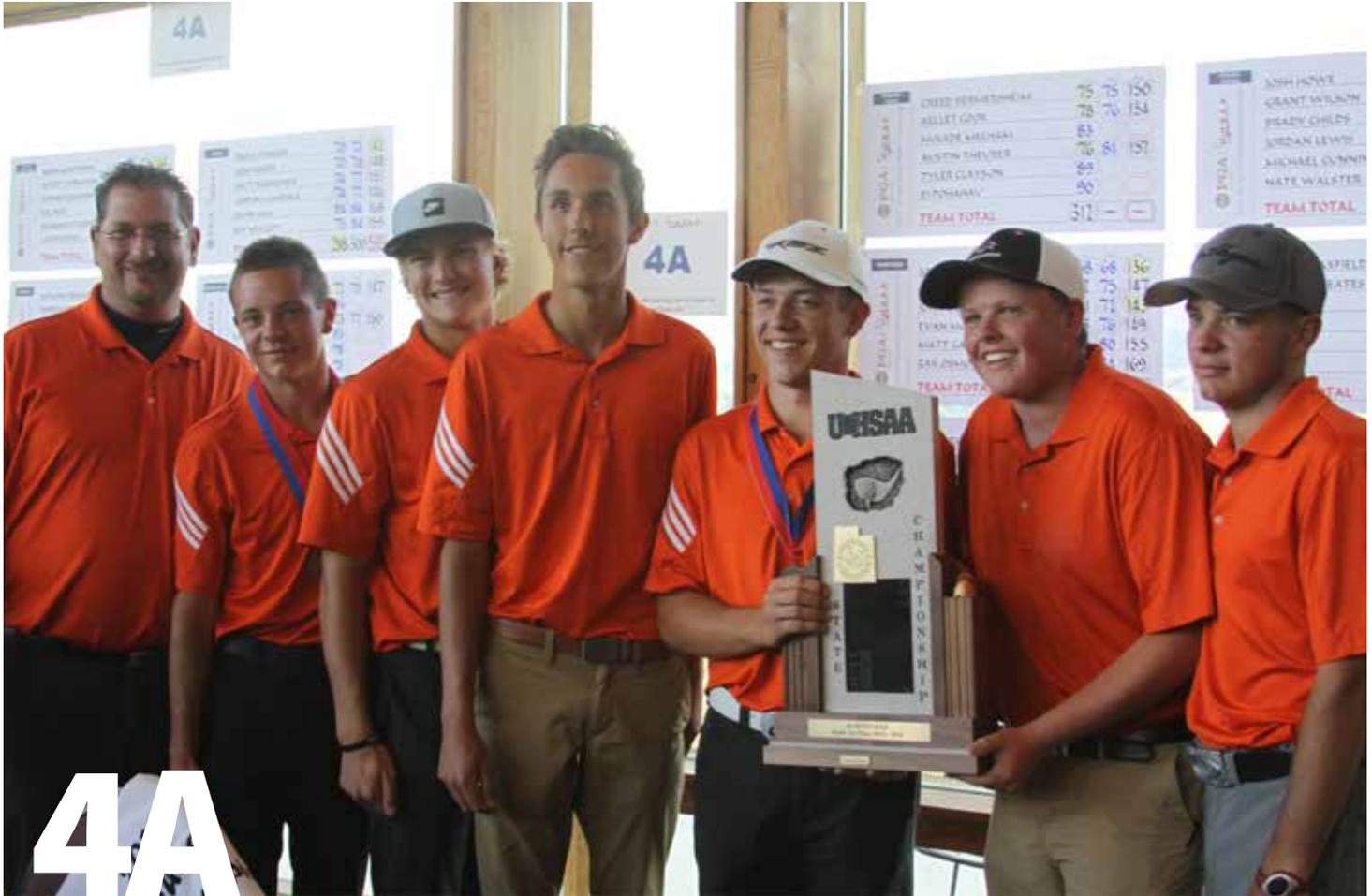
“I’m feeling great,” Schow said about his game. “It’s kind of sad that it’s my last year.”

Schow mentioned his father, who is in recovery from a battle with cancer, as his motivation.

“After all he has been through, it has really taught a lot to me,” Schow said. “He’s played the biggest role in my life. he’s the biggest role to me.”

Gardner equaled Schow’s 66 for the best second-round score and finished alone in second at 136. Schone, who couldn’t back up his first-round 66 with enough to chase down Schow, was alone in third at 137.

Boys High School Golf



4A

“On the back I was steady-eddy with nine straight pars. So I was proud of my round,” Howe said.

“This feels great to win. To know that all that hard work paid off. It’s great,” said Howe, who gave credit to working with teacher Boyd Summerhays the last two years for his improvement. “I wouldn’t be here without Boyd. This is what I wanted. This is what you hope for when you work hard.”

Ponich, a high school freshman playing for Davis High School, said he received a quick putting tip from a friend’s father before his remarkable round.

“That was really the kicker. I hit probably four times as many putts (Monday) than I did (Tuesday),” Ponich said.

“I did everything i could to give myself a chance,” said Ponich, who notched nine birdies without a bogey on Tuesday. “I knew on the back nine that if I wanted t give myself a chance I was going to have to step it up.”

Ponich birdied four of his last five holes to almost chase down Howe.

Andrew Davis of American Fork took third

place at 137, with Carson Lundell, of Lone Peak and Bridger Norris, of Weber, tied for fourth at 139. Lone Peak’s Jake Livingston, Lone Peak’s Elijah Turner and Brighton’s David Timmins tied for sixth at 140, Fremont’s Dylan Chugg finished ninth at 142, and Viewmont’s Drew Smith, at 143, rounded out the top 10.

Lone Peak took the 5A team title, out-pacing Weber by four strokes.

“This was an amazing victory for our team,” Lone Peak assistant coach Shawn Brenchley said. “This was a lot more than the scores on the card. Our team really worked hard at accomplishing our core principles — including honesty, hard work and friendship. So this was special.”

Lone Peak posted a two-round team total of 562 — including a second-round 284 on the Soldier Hollow Gold Course Tuesday.

Weber finished second at 566, while Davis High was third at 572.

4A

Nothing short of victory was gong to please

Corner Canyon senior Rhett Rasmussen.

After a second-place finish a year ago, the BYU recruit wanted to finish his high school career with a bang.

He confidently accomplished his goal.

Rasmussen recovered from what he said was a disappointing first round of 4-under 68, to shoot a sizzling 7-under 65 on the Soldier Hollow Silver Course in Tuesday’s second round.

Rasmussen finished at 133, three strokes clear of Timpview’s Josh Lillywhite, to collect the individual trophy.

“It was like night and day out there,” Rasmussen said comparing his first to second round. “I made some putts (Tuesday), that was the biggest difference. I am very happy with what I did (in the second round).”

It was quite the contrast to his sentiments on Monday. Despite a respectable 68, Rasmussen said, “I was terrible. It’s like there is a glass cover on the hole for me right now. I’m hitting it great, I just can’t get it in the hole.”

“(Rhett) put a lot of pressure on himself for this tournament,” said Todd Tanner, Rasmussen’s



"I got off to a great start," Schone said on Wednesday. "I birdied the first hole, then chipped in for eagle on the third hole, and birdied the fourth hole. So I started really hot."

Jersey Houston of Tooele High School finished in fourth at 138. Park City High's Drew Fleming and Tooele High's Braxton Quin tied for fifth at 142, Dixie High's Kosuke Aoki was seventh at 143, and Carbon's Ryker Smith, Union's Austin Jaramillo and Bear River's Tristan Hartfiel tied for eighth at 145.

Schow got his wish by helping Park City win its eighth straight team title. The squad finished at 571, out-pacing second place Tooele High School by 20 strokes. Snow Canyon was third at 604.

2A

Only one 2A golfer managed to eclipse par in two rounds on the Silver Course at Soldier Hollow.

But Rowland Hall senior Garret Furubayashi survived a two-hole playoff Thursday to win the

medalist honors.

His consecutive rounds of 75 and 72 put hi at 3-over 147, equal to Manti High School's Davis Hardy, who posted a second-round score of 3-under 69 for the only under-par round in the classification.

Furubayashi admitted to being nervous as he stepped on the 18th tee for the playoff. But after both he and Hardy, both carded par on the first playoff hole, he stroked a hybrid down the middle of the fairways to set up a closing par for victory.

"I was a little stressed out in the playoff but I guess it all worked out," Furubayashi said. "It was kind of nerve-racking."

Rowland Hall head coach Stacey Camacho said he's noticed remarkable improvement in Furubayashi since he was a freshman.

"We started working together when he was a freshman and all the hours he has put in to make this happen are countless," Camacho said. "He was there in the winter, when it was raining, or when it was 100 degrees outside."

Mason Ward, a sophomore at Grand County turned in Wednesday's top score, 2-over 74 and finished third at 150.

"I played great," said Ward after his first round. "I hit everything where I was looking. I am very happy with my round."

Ward's teammate at Grand Canyon, Brendon Woodard, and South Sevier's Rowdee Taylor tied for fourth at 152. Juan Brigard, of Layton Christian, was alone in sixth at 153. Beaver High's Davis Heslington finished seventh at 154, South Sevier's Gage Esker was eighth at 155, and Grand County's Alec Williams and Waterford's Jack Nilsen tied for ninth at 156.

In the 2A team race, Grand County finished comfortably out front at 616. South Sevier finished second at 631. Manti was third at 647.

"It feels really good," Grand County coach Aaron Woodard said. "The kids really wanted it."

Moody, Schneider Crowned Omega Utah Section PGA Players of the Year in Final Standings

By Aaron Goodman

For the fourth consecutive year, Chris Moody is the Utah Section PGA Player of the Year. Moody earned the Assistant Player of the Year title this year as well. Moody is the only player in Utah Section history to have achieved Player of the Year and Assistant Player of the Year in the same year. He has now accomplished that feat not once, not twice, but three times (2010, 2014, and 2015)!

Counting this year Moody now has five POY titles and eight APOY titles overall. Most notable this year for Moody was his Match Play Championship win at Hubbard HAFB, winning the BHI Golf Classic Open at Dinaland Golf Course and his T7 overall finish (lowest Section Professional) in the Siegfried & Jensen Utah Open at Riverside Country Club.

Nipping at his heels in both season long standings were Zach Johnson who finished second and Matt Baird who finished third.

The clear cut winner for this year's Senior Player of the Year is Steve Schneider. Schneider earned 4,500 SPOY points this year, that's more than double the nearest competitor's point total. Prominent wins for Schneider this year included the Nike Winter Classic and the Allen Simkins Utah Senior Open. Brad Stone edged out Jimmy Blair for second place.

For the first time ever the points earned in these contests has meant more than just bragging rights and personal ranking; they equal money. Thanks to the sponsorship agreement between the PGA of America and Omega, all three contests: Player of the Year, Assistant Player of the Year and Senior Player of the Year, now have prize money. Omega is the presenting sponsor and Official Timekeeper of the PGA Professional National Championship and continues to support our local Section and Senior Championships. Congratulations to all the winners!



Chris Moody



Steve Schneider

Top Five Omega Player of the Year:

1 Chris Moody.....	5865.00
2 Zach Johnson	5017.50
3 Matt Baird	4685.00
4 Tommy Sharp	3935.41
T5 Tracy Zobell.....	3472.50
T5 Pete Stone	3472.50

Omega Senior Player of the Year:

1 Steve Schneider	4500.00
2 Brad Stone	1800.00
3 James Blair.....	1500.00
4 Scott Brandt	1275.00
5 Kim Thompson	1000.00

Omega Assistant Player of the Year:

1 Chris Moody	6465.00
2 Zach Johnson	5517.50
3 Matt Baird	4685.00
T4 Steve Schneider	3592.50
T4 Pete Stone	3592.50

The Omega Money Lists

\$9,350 Omega prize money is distributed among the three contests. Players take highest finish/most money if eligible for multiple contests. Final points/payout pending completion of Senior Match Play Championship.

Omega Player	Purse	Payout
1 Chris Moody.....	5,865.00	.....\$1,000.00
2 Zach Johnson.....	5,517.50	.....\$800.00
3 Tommy Sharp.....	3,935.41	.....\$700.00
T4 Tracy Zobell.....	3,472.50	.....\$550.00
T4 Pete Stone	3,472.50	.....\$550.00
6 Joe Summerhays.....	3,018.00	.....\$400.00
7 Mark Owen	2,470.00	.....\$300.00
8 Dustin Volk.....	2,436.75	.....\$200.00
9 Shawn Edwards	1,390.00	.....\$150.00
10 Troy Watkins.....	1,263.33	.....\$100.00
		\$4,750.00

Omega Player	Purse	Payout
1 Steve Schneider	4,500.00	.....\$750.00
2 Brad Stone.....	1,800.00	.....\$500.00
3 James Blair.....	1,500.00	.....\$400.00
4 Scott Brandt	1,275.00	.....\$350.00
5 Kim Thompson.....	1,000.00	.....\$300.00
		\$2,300.00

Omega Player	Purse	Payout
1 Matt Baird	4,685.00	.....\$750.00
2 Todd Tanner	1,757.08	.....\$500.00
3 Milo Lines.....	1,548.65	.....\$400.00
4 Quentin Sasser.....	762.50	.....\$350.00
5 Johnathon Ward	726.83	.....\$300.00
		\$2,300.00

Thanks for the Memories!

By Scott Whittacker, Utah Section PGA Executive Director, Retired

My retirement from the Utah Section PGA Executive Director position is certainly a bitter yet sweet moment of my career. My biggest impressions as I retire are of all the great memories that I have stored up along the way and of all of the great people I have met and rubbed shoulders with over the last 40 years. Although some of these great associations have been with accomplished PGA and national golf leaders my fondest experiences have been with or about my PGA friends and associates right here in Utah.

I have always approached both the game of golf and my associations with the Utah Section PGA and formerly the Central Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Section with the knowledge that Utah golf was something special that few other places in the country are lucky enough to experience. This concept has been born out time and again by the great ideas and cohesive friendship in golf that my fellow golf professionals and allied associations have extended to me and others in the game.

The Utah Section PGA has been blessed with a lot of great solid leaders that were willing to work tirelessly on behalf of their association putting family activities and personal goals on hold while they served the membership and especially helped me in achieving good things for the Section as a whole. Certainly my last 14 years as the Section ED have been personally very rewarding. I have had a front row seat to observe the dedication, enthusiasm, and expertise of not only our top performing officers but I have witnessed great programs and dedication to the game at every level.

I was blown away by the great honor of being elected Utah Section PGA Professional of the Year! Although most of my accomplishments are a direct result of my staff, officers and a willing membership, there is not a greater honor I could receive because it comes from the heart where all of my best memories are located. There were so many great and deserving nominees for the Professional of the Year award this year I appreciate them putting their goals on hold to



honor me this year.

The game of golf is a great game in that it tends to bring out the best in the people that play it. Yes it is a challenging game to play and industry to work in and we sometimes fall short of the ideal performance or fail to act as we should to instill the game's value in others. However, the challenges the game presents are the very tests that improve us as both golfers and people. As I become less and less a part of the daily decisions of our association I hope others will see the long term values of this game and will step up the promotion of the game within their clubs, with Utah golfers and especially those outside the game that are currently negatively influencing its future.

It is critical that we do not become immobilized by the traditions of the game. It is

a slippery slope to use the past as a roadmap for the future instead of integrating new ideas and plans. Upholding traditions is not the same as providing a continuing exclusivity to the game on every level. The idea of making each facility more and more exclusive has acerbated the trend of the millennials turning away from the game. Utah has always been a public golf state where all are welcome. I hope we continue to prove that we are a great learning place for current and future golf industry leaders.

I'm sure you will have to yet endure many more of my words of thanks at the upcoming awards ceremony in February. I certainly have a long list of people to thank including all of you.

See you on the links; I will most likely be located in an unplayable lie.

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