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A Championship of Repeats

By Mike Sorensen



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Dick Harmon is a sportswriter for the Deseret News and a frequent contributor to Fairways.



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A New Champion

By Mike Sorensen

Back in the late 1970s, Craig Wilson was a hotshot junior golfer in his home state of Washington, where a fellow junior named Fred Couples once caddied for him at a big tournament.

A couple of years later, Wilson was recruited to play for BYU, where he was a member of the 1981 national championship team that included future PGA regulars, Dick Zokol, Keith Clearwater and Rick Fehr.

However, a bewildering case of the putting yips when he was still in his early 20s caused Wilson to curtail his college career. Although he still enjoyed the game, he stopped playing competitive golf.

Fast forward 30 years and Wilson is back, so to speak. Wilson beat Utah's top senior golfers on his way to the UGA Senior Match Play Championship in mid-May, capping off his week by defeating Brett Sampson on the 19th hole of their championship match at Davis Park Golf Course to earn the glass trophy.

"It's great to win – it shows I'm making progress," said Wilson, who has been quickly making up for lost time on the golf course. "I probably didn't deserve to win, but somehow I sneaked out a win."

Wilson, a financial consultant, who lives in Holladay with his wife and five children, recently decided to start taking the game more seriously after just playing golf for fun for many years. He played in the State Amateur two years ago where he qualified for match play and gave champion Cole Ogden his toughest match of the week in a 19-hole duel.

But Wilson really got serious this past year when he replaced his 33-year-old Ping Eye 2 irons with some new Titlelists AP 2 irons and started heeding the advice of his neighbor "Doc" Ron Cohn.

"He's an absolute guru," Wilson said. "He has an incredible golf mind. He's told me things I never thought about and has really helped me. All of a sudden I felt I could hit any shot. I see shots differently and I have a lot of confidence in every shot I hit now."

Wilson told his wife he wanted to play more golf this year, bought a range pass and "practiced as if I was back in college and high school." And it's been paying off as he shot a 64 in a senior tournament at Bountiful Ridge the week before the Senior Match Play tourney.

After shooting a so-so 74 in the medal play to get the No. 23 seed, Wilson barely made it through his first two matches, beating Rick Lloyd 1 up and Craig Gardner in 19 holes.

Then he knocked off former champion Bill Probst 5 and 4 in the quarterfinals and then edged Dana Nelson 1 up in the semis.

Sampson, a long-hitter from Payson, had rolled through most of his matches on his way to the finals, beating Russell Hook 2 and 1 and Todd Kartchner 4 and 2 in the first two rounds before picking up steam and beating former State Am champ Todd Barker 5 and 3 in the quarterfinals and John Edwards 6 and 4 in the semifinals. Edwards had eliminated two-time defending champion Kirk Siddens in the quarters, but was no

match for Sampson.

In the finals, played under cool, rainy conditions, Wilson won the first hole with a birdie, but saw Sampson take the lead with wins at holes 6 and 7. Wilson evened the match with a par at No. 11, only to see Sampson re-take the lead with a birdie at No. 13. At the par-3 16th hole, Sampson's ball hit the left bunker and when he couldn't get up and down, Wilson won the hole with a par.

Sampson had a big edge at the short 301-yard par-4 18th hole since he had been outdriving Wilson by as much as 50 yards on some holes. Sampson drove the green about 25 feet from the cup, while Wilson had a wedge shot.

Wilson left his approach 15 feet away and after Sampson missed his eagle putt, he drained his downhill putt, sending the pair to the No. 1 hole. There, Sampson's approach shot flew the green and when he missed his 8-foot putt, Wilson just needed to make his 4-foot par putt for the match.

In the Super Senior Division for golfers 65 and older, Allen Simkins won for the third time in four years with a 2 up victory over Jeff Campbell.

The 69-year-old Simkins, a former vice president at Weber State University, eagled the par-4 8th hole to take the lead, only to see Campbell tie the match with a birdie at 13. But Simkins won the 14th with a par and then at 18, hit his wedge to within three feet to clinch the match.

In the Net Division, Craig F. Sorensen, a 12-handicapper who plays out of Schneider's Bluff, defeated Jason Tanner 1 up. Tanner was 1 up after 13 holes, but Sorensen won the next two holes and clinched the match when both halved the final hole.

Mike Sorensen is a sportswriter for the Deseret News and a frequent contributor to Fairways.

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Product Review

by Mike Stansfield

Cleveland Golf Tfi Smart Square Putter

Callaway Mack Daddy PM Grind Wedge

OptiShot2 Golf Simulator

Ping Glide Wedges

Talon Golf Glove

Talon Golf Glove

Taking a cue from football gloves, the new Talon Golf Glove features the revolutionary Tack Fusion grip technology. This cutting-edge material provides extraordinary grip in all playing conditions, is cooler and last longer than typical leather gloves. The Talon glove is remarkably comfortable and provides maximum flexibility. The grip re-energizes with machine wash or damp cloth.



TriCaddy Flex Pro