Bellis edges Hoos in CGA Public Links playoff
By ED WERDER
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Nothing seemed to go according to plan.

The Colorado Golf Association’s Public Links Championship was a stroke-play tournament with an un
planned match-play finish Sunday.

Also, what was supposed to be a 24-hole
match-play playoff at Lake Valley Golf
Club was decided in 56.

Those responsible for the changes are
Shawn Bellis and Boulder’s Eric Hoos.

Bellis, who had a par-210 after 54 holes of stroke
play.

Two holes later, Bellis won the
match-play portion, more commonly
known as sudden death.

Using a sand wedge, Bellis, who
shot a 68 after starting the final
round two shots behind Hoos and
Rick DeWitt, chipped in from 15
feet for a birdie to beat Hoos on the third hole of a sudden death-off.

Bellis, Hoos and Brad Penfold
earned berths in the USGA Public Links Championships to be played in
Spokane, Wash. July 16-21 for having
the lowest scores over the final 36
holes. Hoos, who shot a 70 in the
final round, had a 130 total. Bellis and
Penfold, who had a 60 Sunday to
finish third, shot 140.

For awhile it appeared Bellis was going
to be the victor.

On the first sudden-death hole, Hoos
barely missed a 30-foot birdie putt
after hitting a fairway shot that
went 105 yards down the fairway.

And Bellis seemed in trouble on
the second hole as well.

He hit his tee shot far right and
left the rough on the No. 2 hole.

Hoos was in the fringe to the left.

Then Bellis hit an 8-iron.

“A real crappy 8-iron,” his caddy,
Bob Weaver said.

Bellis had another name for it.

“Grounder to third,” he yelled as
his low drive landed on a knoll short of
the green.

Hoos, who plays out of the Flatiron
Country Club, hit his second shot
on the green, about 35 feet right of
the pin.

He pulled the flag and stood over
his ball. “Pull a Fuzzy,” Weaver
called in reference to Fuzzy Zoeller.

He did.

Hoos then left his birdie attempt
right of the hole and shook hands
with Bellis.

The victory seemed to leave Bellis,
who spent parts of seven years on
the mini-tour and professional tours in Asia and New Zealand, in good
humor.

Nothing, however, seemed funny to
Hoos, who finished at 8-over for
the day and 218 for the tournament.

He was tied for the lead with
Hoos going to the seventh tee. DeWitt,
Hoos and Bellis each had the sixth hole because the threesome ahead of them
was still in the fairway.

DeWitt put his golf ball and
glove in his bag and sat down. When
DeWitt reached into his bag for the
glove and ball he pulled out the right
glove but the wrong ball. Hoos noticed the unintended exchange and
DeWitt suffered a two-stroke penalty
that put him 4-over. It also cost
DeWitt a chance to playoff with
Penfold for two berths in the national tournament.

“It’s the very first rule on the
sheet they hand out,” Hoos said.

“I felt empty,” said DeWitt, who
won a playoff on the first hole over
Randy Winn to be an alternate to the
national tourney.

For the final 48 holes of the CGA
tournament, DeWitt was the only player
of a field of more than 100 who played
three days to make such a mistake.

DeWitt, who had a 65 Saturday for
the last 18 holes, had four bogeys,
a double bogey and no birdies Sunday
tied for fifth with Longmont’s Dan Thompson and Winn.

Penfold was seventh with 219.

The next hole was eventful for
Bellis, who birdied to tie for the lead
with Hoos, who parred.

Hoos and Bellis each had the
rest of the way, neither able to get more than one stroke ahead during the
remaining 10 holes.

Bellis, 28, made the turn in
2-under, while Hoos played par on the
front.

Hoos had birdies on Nos. 13 and 15
to lead for the first time. That
lead lasted until the ninth hole when
Hoos tied.

It stayed tied until the second
hole of the playoff.