

# Eaton defeats Hogan for Senior Match Play title

By DAVE NELSON  
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Larry Eaton turned 50 on Valentine's Day. There has been no love lost between the Greeley automobile dealer and his friendly rivals on the senior golf circuit since.

"I'm the rookie in this league," Eaton observed Saturday after winning the State Senior Match Play Championship at Fitzsimons Golf Club.

Eaton may indeed be a rookie. But he's no beginner. The smooth-swinging veteran proved that again Saturday when he scored a 3 and 2 victory over Dan Hogan which enabled him to complete a sweep of the state's two major senior events. Eaton also claimed the Senior Medal Play title earlier this year.

"I guess you'd have to call it the mini-slam," Eaton said of his performance this year. It was more like an overpowering "grand slam" as far as his rivals were concerned.

"He played awfully well all week," Hogan admitted. "He had it going every day. I've got no alibis."

Eaton equalled par of 72 during qualifying

rounds Monday and he had it under par in winning each of his matches during the week. He was four under through 14 holes in a 5 and 4 victory over Bob Karlin in the quarterfinals and was two under through 13 holes while posting a 6 and 5 win over Jim Gwinn in the semifinals. Saturday, he was one under regulation figures when he closed out his title duel with Hogan on the 16th hole.

Despite his impressive debut in the senior ranks this year, neither Eaton nor Hogan were willing to predict that the Northern Colorado strongman could be on the verge of creating a dynasty.

"In 32 years between puberty and senility I haven't won anything," Eaton said while pointing out that his last major victory came when he won the State High School golf title in 1949 when he was a senior at Greeley High School.

"We've got Tom Reed and Ron Moore (both former state champions) warming up in the bullpen," noted Hogan, who completed his first campaign as a senior this year after turning 50 last October.

Reed attended Saturday's title match as an

official of the sponsoring Colorado Golf Association. Moore proved earlier this year he has lost none of his touch when he won the State Match Play championship. Both are 49 and will be eligible to pursue the senior crown next year.

"I thought I'd better get my licks in before some of those 47 and 48-year-olds get to be fifty," Eaton smiled.

"I don't see that happening," Eaton said of a possible dynasty in the future. "It won't be long before I'm playing in the 55 and over group."

Eaton took an early 2-up lead when Hogan caught a pair of sand bunkers on the second and third holes and dropped behind with back-to-back bogeys. Eaton then padded his lead to 3-up when he holed a 10-foot birdie putt on the sixth hole.

Hogan won his first hole of the match when he dropped a 30-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole but Eaton quickly got that one back when Hogan again caught a trap on the par-3 11th hole and again bogeyed. "I'm not a good sand player, but I should have got at least one of those up and down," Hogan observed. "That really put me in a bind."

Hogan reduced the margin to 2-down again when he reached the par-5 15th with a drive and a 4-wood and two-putted from 25 feet for a birdie. Eaton then closed out the match on the next hole when Hogan was short with his approach and failed to salvage his par.

"I haven't played much competitive golf in the last few years," Hogan admitted. "I didn't think very well out there at times and I had trouble concentrating."

"Outside of that, I sure can't notice any difference between the seniors and what it used to be. I had to beat Les Fowler (a former senior champion and one of the state's finest players for the past three decades) one day and Ed Nosewicz (the defending champion) the next. That's no walk in the park and I played better today than in any other round of the tournament. I had a bit of a shaky start, but after the sixth hole I played as well as I can expect to play."

Eaton drove the ball extremely well and putted well all during the tournament. "I haven't three-putted too many greens and that's really the key to the game," he noted. "I would say generally speaking I drove the ball well."