

It's Welz to a tee, again

Senior takes third straight match-play title

By Todd Phipers

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BOULDER — The third time was the charm for Bert Welz yesterday in the Colorado Senior Match Play Championship at Flatirons Golf Club.

Just like the last two times.

Welz, of Columbine Country Club, defeated Larry Anderson of Greeley Country Club 1 up in 20 holes to capture his third straight seniors match play title, an unprecedented trifecta in the 23-year-old tournament.

Actually, it was the fourth consecutive trip to the final match for the 54-year-old Littleton homemaker, who was runnerup in 1989 before battling to his first two titles by beating Anderson 2 and 1 in '90 and Larry Eaton 1 up in '91.

This year was even tougher. Down 3 with three holes to play in the championship, Welz captured the 16th, 17th and 18th to get back to even; halved the first sudden-death hole when Anderson sank a gritty eight-foot putt to save par, then won the match when the 54-year-old Greeley insurance man was unable to duplicate that feat from about five feet on the second extra hole.

"Being 3 down with three to play, it was just some kind of miracle," Welz said. "My game finally came back a little bit and Larry's fell apart, and that was the difference."

Indeed, it was a combination of Welz' recuperative powers and an Anderson collapse punctuated by a couple of bad breaks that earned Welz the title.

The Greeley golfer — a one-time University of Colorado basketball player who won the 1988 title — led most of the match and built his lead to 3 up on a gimme par at the par-3 15th hole after Welz put his tee shot in the water.

CGA SENIORS/Results

Championship: Bert Welz def. Larry Anderson 1 up in 20 holes.

Championship Consolation: John Golden def. Ed Sweeney 2 & 1.

Championship Overflow A: Dick Goosen def. G.J. Richards 5 & 4.

Championship Overflow B: Dick Hanson def. Don Allen 2 & 1.

Net A: Clyde Robinson def. William Fay 2 & 1.

Net B: Jay Bechtel def. Jack Sidi 5 & 3.

Net C: Woodrow Hassinger def. Dalton Roberts 2 up.

Net D: Bob Payne def. Bill McMurray 5 & 4.

"I'd given up," the champion admitted afterwards. "I really had, because Larry is a great player."

Anderson also felt the match was his at that point. "You think that, but things can happen, and when they start happening, they have a tendency to snowball. You see it slipping away and there's not much you can do about it."

Anderson's slide began when his tee shot on the par-4 16th hit a tree and wound up half submerged in a ditch.

"That gave me a little life," said Welz, who won that hole, got back within 2 after his opponent's drive found a fairway bunker at No. 17 and pulled back to even when Anderson missed the 18th green and failed to save his par from about eight feet.

"You get some bad breaks and then you just can't get the job done, that's all," he said. "It's just frustrating — totally, totally frustrating."

"I feel sorry for him," Welz said. "I hate to have anybody lose a match the way events turned today. That's a tough one to lose."