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**BIRDIE TIME:** Bert Welz plants a kiss on his ball after sinking a birdie putt on the 15th hole as runnerup Larry Eaton looks on.

# Welz gets best of birdie barrage

By Todd Phipers

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Ever seen a seniors slam-dunk contest?

Bert Welz and Larry Eaton put on golfing's equivalent of one in the title match of the Colorado Seniors Match-Play Championship at The Ranch Country Club yesterday, banging home birdie putts from long range on the final four holes as Welz prevailed 1-up.

The match was decided by the last of those four, a 30-foot, downhill breaker on the 18th hole that staved off a gallant comeback bid by Eaton.

It was the second straight victory in the tournament for the 53-year-old Welz, of Columbine Country Club, making him the first back-to-back winner in senior match play since Ed Nosewicz in 1977-78. And it deprived the 58-year-old Eaton, of Greeley Country Club, a fifth title in the event he last won in 1987.

"Larry's one of the greatest competitors," Welz said, "and

## MATCH PLAY

Results yesterday in the Colorado Seniors Match-Play Championship at the Ranch Country Club:

### SEMIFINALS

Bert Welz def. Tom Reed 3 and 2; Larry Eaton def. John Kaiser 4 and 3.

### FINALS

Welz def. Eaton 1-up.

just to be in the same league playing with him, I really enjoyed it. He's a player."

Both finalists cruised through their morning semifinals, Welz downing Tom Reed 3 and 2 while Eaton was eliminating John Kaiser 4 and 3. Early in the deciding match, it appeared that Welz might enjoy more of the same.

He jumped in front with a 15-foot birdie putt on the first hole, went 2-up with a par on No. 3 and extended his lead to 3-up when Eaton's attempt to backhand a chip from under a tree on the following hole hit him in the leg, an

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## 18th-hole putt proves decisive

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automatic loss of hole.

"I didn't play very well for the beginning of the round," Eaton said. "I don't know why. I just didn't hit it as crisply as I like."

But the longtime state amateur standout battled back, twice narrowing the margin to 1-up, and that's the way it stood going to the par-3 15th.

It was there that the fireworks began, with Welz draining a downhill 30-footer for birdie to go 2-up with just three holes to play. "I thought, definitely, the tide was going my way," he admitted.

"Two down and three to play is tough," Eaton agreed, "and I figured I had to make a putt and maybe I could get back in it. I knew he wasn't going to let me in so I knew I had to get birdies."

No sooner said than done. After a 20-footer at No. 16 got him back within 1-down, Eaton left his tee shot on the par-3 17th about 30 feet right of the flagstick. "I guess I'll just drain it," he said, then did to draw even for the first time in the match.

"I was happy to be even on the 18th tee," said Eaton, and no doubt even happier when he boomed a drive right down the middle and Welz hooked his into the left rough, behind some trees and in the general

## CGA WINNERS

**Championship:** Bert Welz def. Larry Eaton 1-up.

**Championship consolation:** Jack Bradbury defeated Dick Goosen 4 and 3.

**Scratch first flight:** Leo Davis beat Homer Dunn 1-up.

**Net first flight:** Dick Coffenbow defeated Richard Kern 7 and 6.

**Second flight:** Jack Watkins defeated Charlie Stevens 3 and 2.

**Third flight:** Paul Maschindt defeated Bob Betz 2-up.

**Fourth flight:** Robert Hollahan defeated Don Van Schooneveld 3 and 3.

**Fifth flight:** Jerry Russell defeated Ed Tanguay 2 and 1.

**Sixth flight:** Oliver Padilla defeated Charlie Austin 2 and 1.

firing line of the course's practice range.

With practice balls bouncing all around him, Welz drilled a 6-iron shot about 170 yards up the hill to the green, some 30 feet above the flag, and Eaton hit a poor approach shot that left him below the hole, a little farther away.

Believe it or not, that's the way Welz preferred it. "I'd rather have a downhill putt than an uphill putt. On these grainy greens, it's a lot easier putting downhill. The ball stays on track a little longer," he said.

That unorthodox strategy proved sound when Eaton left his first putt well short and Welz followed with the winner. "Larry's uphill putt was quite a bit short and I figured, 'I'm just going to lag this and let the grain take it.'"

## CGA Senior Match Play Bert Welz defends title

BROOMFIELD — Bert Welz of Columbine Country Club became the first golfer in 13 years to win back-to-back titles in the CGA Senior Match Play Championship by defeating four-time champ Larry Eaton of Greeley Country Club 1-up at The Ranch Country Club yesterday.

Welz won the match on the final hole, sinking a thirty-foot birdie putt.

Welz defeated home course favorite Tom Reed in the morning semifinal 3 and 2 while Eaton defeated John Kaiser of The Meadows Golf Course 4 and 3.