

**CHICAGOLAND'S
CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Park Ridge Country Club

Park Ridge, Illinois, September 20, 2012

By Dennis LaLiberty

Ted Pecora of Bob O' Link Golf Club, Highland Park, Illinois, scored a decisive victory in the *Champion of Champions* golf tournament, a one day stroke play event hosted by Park Ridge Country



Club featuring the individual champions of private golf clubs in the Chicago metropolitan area. Pecora's round of two under par 68 tied a record for low round since the tournament's 1998 establishment at its Park Ridge permanent home. Were it not for some miscues over the last three holes, Pecora, who was five under par after a chip-in birdie on the long 4 par 15th, threatened to not only set the tournament record but also Park Ridge Country Club's course record of 65, set by Head Professional Rick Groessl and PGA TOUR Professional Mark O'Meara. An errant approach at 16 left Pecora just off the green facing a delicate chip out of the rough. His third shot left him a twisting 6' putt which he rimmed out for bogey. Then, on the three par 17th, playing over 200 yards into a swirling wind, an excellent shot left Pecora pin high and some 12' left of the pin, but his

birdie putt came up short right and his slippery three footer for par spun out, leaving him with another bogey. Nevertheless, a par on the long dogleg par 4 eighteenth hole would still insure the tournament record, but a pulled drive into the trees on the left necessitated a punch-out and, while his third shot onto the green left him with an eight footer for par, once again, between green speed and undulation, a courageous recovery effort resulted in another lip out and a third consecutive bogey.

Pecora's game was strong early on. He played the front nine in four under par, including back to back birdies at the par 5 third and fourth holes, plus two more birdies at holes 6 and 9. With this early cushion, a slight letdown on the back nine was no cause for concern.



Terry Werner of Briar Ridge Country Club, who won the tournament three times previously, was the runner up, carding an even par 70. Werner had to settle for pars on holes 15 through 17, with a chip-in birdie on 18, certainly praiseworthy on these difficult holes, but not enough to seriously challenge the leader.

Ted Pecora is somewhat of an anomaly as a champion golfer since he didn't take up the game until he was 27 years old. Up until then, his sport of choice was baseball. When he saw how many of his friends were into golf, he decided to start playing, initially learning

the game as a member of Beverly Country Club. Later, after he moved to Chicago's northern suburbs, he joined Bob O' Link Golf Club where he said the opportunity to play against so many low handicap players tuned his game to the championship level. Pecora had never played Park Ridge Country Club previously, but said he found the course challenging and the greens fast and demanding, yet eminently fair.

The tournament was played in beautiful early autumn weather with a stiff southwest wind adding to the degree of difficulty, especially on the par 3 holes, with #12 playing an average of one stroke over par and #5 almost as difficult.

Chicagoland's *Champion of Champions* invitational golf tournament for men was first played in 1933, and was held annually at various clubs until 1984. Park Ridge Country Club revived the tournament in 1998 and has hosted it annually ever since. The traveling trophy to be displayed at the home club of the winner was donated by the Western Golf Association (WGA).

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