

**CHICAGOLAND'S
CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS GOLF TOURNAMENT
Park Ridge Country Club**



Park Ridge, Illinois, September 29, 2011
By Dennis La Liberty

Mike Slaven of Olympia Fields Country Club, Olympia Fields, Illinois, emerged as the one stroke winner of 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. Slaven's one over par 71 was accomplished under difficult circumstances including multiple weather delays, blustery wind conditions, and a few treacherous pin placements. Joe McGowan of the Onwentsia

Club finished second with a 72 and was the leader in the clubhouse until Slaven completed his round, while Michael Affeldt [Butler National] was the next closest golfer at four over par with 74.

As usual, Park Ridge's "Last Mile"—the long 4 par 15th hole, the left hand dogleg 16th, the lengthy par 3 17th and the double dogleg par 4 18th hole—insured that the contest would be close. For Slaven, a double bogey on 15 after a rain delay almost derailed his round, but he quickly recovered with a clutch birdie on 16, followed by pars on 17 and 18, the latter thanks to a one-putt from 6 feet after a well executed sand shot out of the right hand bunker to a short-side pin. McGowan went par-par on holes 15 and 16 but, as events proved, a bogey on 17 kept him out of a tie for the lead despite his making one of very few birdies on the final hole. Another swing hole for the two close competitors was the par 5 tenth, ordinarily offering birdie potential to many players but today playing unusually difficult owing to a treacherous pin position. Despite the increased degree of difficulty, Slaven made a rare birdie, while McGowan stumbled to a bogey.

Mike Slaven is a graduate of Miami University of Ohio where he played on the golf team. Originally a hockey player in his youth, Mike was only an occasional golfer until he took up the game seriously in his junior year in high school. Slaven qualified for the U.S. Amateur this year played at the difficult new Erin Hills course in Southern Wisconsin. Previously, in both 2009 and 2010, Slaven qualified for and played in the Mid-Amateur (for players at least 25 years of age).

Mike Slaven is the third member of Olympia Fields to win the *Champion of Champions* in the last twelve years. Mike Mortell was a two-time winner in years 2000 and 2001 and, more recently, Mark Faulds won in 2005. Olympia Fields, with two 18 hole courses, some 600 members, and a history of prestigious tournaments, produces many fine golfers, so that anyone emerging as the club champion there is likely to be a strong competitor in any tournament, and this was certainly the case this year with Mike Slaven.

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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