

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

Park Ridge, Illinois, September 22, 2016

By Dennis LaLiberty

GOING LOW WINS THE DAY FOR FOUR TIME CHAMPION WERNER

It took shaving two strokes from the previous scoring record for Terry Werner of Schererville, Indiana's Briar Ridge Country Club to record a five under par 65 and secure his fourth Champion of Champions victory by one thin stroke over young challenger Kevin Koziol of Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club, Orland Park, IL. The victory capped a great year for Werner, who only two weeks ago won the Indiana State Senior Amateur Championship and was named Indiana's Senior Golfer of the Year. Scoring was



enhanced thanks to perfect weather for golf, with a light haze keeping temperatures in the upper 70's, and a local ruling allowing players to "lift, clean, and place" in their own fairways. Those were ideal conditions for a technician like Werner, who played a textbook fairways and greens game, missing only on Hole #13 where he went into a greenside bunker and Hole #15, where he was just off, but in both cases saving par. Birdies at Holes #1, 7, 9, 10, and 14 and a happy absence of bogeys contributed to the record score. A prime example of Werner's course mastery came on the 18th hole, where he was paired in the last group of the day: From 205 yards out, a perfectly executed draw avoiding trees on his left put him on the green some 20 feet below the pin, followed by a workmanlike 2-putt to cinch his one stroke victory.

Werner's nearest challenger, twenty-five year old Kevin Koziol, was threatening the overall Club record of 64 set by touring PGA professional Fred Funk until he was tripped up on Park Ridge's "Last Mile," the difficult fifteenth through eighteenth holes. After a par on the long four par fifteenth, Koziol just missed birdie at the tricky 16th, which would have put him at 6 under par in line to tie the course record, but he had to settle for par. A great up and down from the right hand rough and over a bunker on the long 3-par

17th, kept him at 5 under. A magnificent 320 yard drive to the center of the fairway on the double dogleg eighteenth put Koziol only 120 yards away from the pin and birdie three, but an errant wedge shot left him short-sided in the right green-side bunker with a delicate sand shot to a right hand pin. The shot was executed to near perfection, leaving a four footer for par and what would ultimately have been a tie at 65, but it was not to be. The putt spun out, giving Koziol the new tournament record round of 66, which regrettably lasted only some 30 minutes until Terry Werner reset the record to its new low of 65.

Interestingly, two other players also tied the previous tournament record of 67, Matt McLaughlin of Barrington Hills CC and Luke Waggoner of Crystal Lake CC, but unfortunately for them this was a year for the record to fall. In the years since the tournament has been played, commencing in 1933, only two players have won more than four times: George Victor (Glen View Club) in 1950, 54, 55, 57 and 62; and Jim Joseph (Ravisloe Country Club) in 1974, 80, 82, 83 and 84. Each won five times. This leaves a looming challenge for Terry Werner to join this elite group and for Kevin Koziol to return and leverage his first-time experience at our Club to even lower scoring in 2017.

Thanks to the beautiful fall weather and the outstanding work of Park Ridge's Grounds Superintendent Joel Purpur and his crew to recover from a soaking rain the day before the tournament, the course was in excellent shape. Many participants remarked favorably on the course grooming, the condition of the greens, the professional organization of the tournament, and friendliness of the staff.



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 CC revived the tournament in 1998 and has hosted it annually ever since with the exception of 2001 when the course was closed for remodeling. The traveling trophy to be displayed at the home club of the winner was donated by the Western Golf Association (WGA).

For additional information, contact:

Richard Peterson 847-698-3305

John Larson 847-345-5284