

Peters survives wild back 9 to claim Palmer title

[Share](#)

Posted Online: July 16, 2011, 10:50 pm

[Comment on this story](#) | [Print this story](#) | [Email this story](#)

By Steve Tappa, stappa@qconline.com

Ben Peters was prepared for a playoff.

However, Ryan Sergeant sadly knew better after both former St. Ambrose University golf stars birdied the final hole Saturday in the **Palmer Hills Amateur**.

Moline's Sergeant saved his best shot for last, snaking in a 35-footer to briefly tie Peters on the two-day tournament's 36th and final green of regulation.

But the Quad City **Amateur** Tour's defending Player of the Year followed by knocking in an 8-footer of his own to cap a back-and-forth battle with Sergeant, his playing partner for the day.

The one-stroke victory came as a surprise for Peters, though.

The Muscatine product figured he needed to sink that final putt just to have a playoff chance at the title after hooking his tee shot left and carding a double-bogey on the 16th hole.

Peters had mismarked his scorecard tracking Sergeant, writing down six strokes instead of seven when Sergeant tripled the par-4 14th, also thanks to an errant tee ball.

"I wish he'd been right," Sergeant lamented after shooting a final-round 70, to finish with a 4-under total of 140 for the tourney.

But then, the scoring snafu was just part of an all-day thrill ride at the Bettendorf public links course.

Sergeant shot a 3-under 33 on the front nine to catch Peters, erasing a two stroke edge by the first-round co-leader, heading into the back nine.

Peters surged ahead by a stroke at 11, when Sergeant three-putted away a 35-foot eagle attempt.

But Peters fell back into a share of the lead with a bogey at 13.

Sergeant then dropped three strokes back with his triple-bogey at 14.

Yet, the pair was tied again after Peters' trouble on 16, coupled with a Sergeant birdie.

The difference, though, came at 17, where Sergeant lipped a par putt while Peters made his.

"It was a wild day," said Sergeant, who just finished his senior season at SAU, 16 years after Peters led the Bees to three Top 10 national finishes.

"I gave it away, and he totally gave it back to me. Neither of us played our best golf. We both made our share of mistakes. Ben made a double (bogey), and he never does that. So it was back-and-forth all day."

Yet, the finish left Sergeant still searching for his first win on the local tour.

"I've been right there, up at the top the last few years, and it's frustrating," Sergeant admitted. "I've finished second or third too many times. But at least I know I'm getting beat by great players."

"If Ben's not the best player in the area, he's as good as anybody out there. We've played together three times now in a final group, and I've improved every time from just playing with him. I'm not there yet, but he's shown me what I need to do to play at his level. I just have to take the next step."

Right behind Peters (5-under 139) and Sergeant in the championship bracket was Dave Schurke (3-under 141).

First-round co-leader Adam White and Peters' old SAU teammate Chris Wilkins were another stroke back at 2-under 142.

In this weekend's sweltering conditions, just three other championship bracket players broke par — Greg Rios, Steve Schwabe and Cole Ferguson.

Dave Waugh also shot a 5-under 139 to win the Senior Division by four strokes.

Peters did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment.