

Peters tops Drenth in playoff; nabs QCAm Tour's top honors

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By Tom Johnston, tjohnston@qconline.com

The script for the Quad City Amateur Tour Championship was filled with intrigue, plot twists and intertwined golf storylines.

Ben Peters pulled off the second Quad-Cities golf three-peat of 2011, winning the Championship and with it, his third straight Player of the Year honor.

The first of those QC golfing three-peats this summer was so much more dramatic when Steve Stricker sank a curling birdie putt on the 72nd hole to win his third straight John Deere Classic on the PGA Tour.

Sunday's Tour Championship crown at Davenport's Crow Valley Golf Club was setting up to have just as thrilling a finish with Peters and annual foil Dusty Drenth – in his final stroke-play event as an amateur before turning pro -- in a playoff for the 36-hole crown. Peters (72-70=142) turned it on over the final nine holes, carding an inward 4-under 32 for a six-stroke swing on the final nine to forge a tie with Drenth (70-72=142) in the event sponsored by The Dispatch/The Rock Island Argus/QCOnline.

"That is quite an accomplishment," said Peters, who has now won four of the last five POY honors.

The top two players on the QCAm Tour's points list heading into the event had it set up to be a fantastic finish. If Drenth had won the playoff, he also would have taken the POY honors – by a mere 10 points -- for the second time in four years. In what would have been a heart-tugging story, that also would have completed the "family sweep." Mark Drenth, Dusty's dad, won both the Tour Championship by four strokes over Mike Long and also took POY honors in the Senior Division.

In the Championship Division playoff, the tension mounted as both Peters and Drenth parred the first three holes. On the 389-yard, par-4 fourth, both found the fairway off the tee.

But the event took a dark turn from there for Drenth. He "got stuck" on his swing on his 9-iron approach from 151 yards and pushed it right. Not only did he short-side himself with the right pin placement, but also ended up on a very thin lie. Not being able to get grass-underneath contact, his pitch ran past the cup. After Peters lagged his birdie putt from the fringe to tap-in distance, Drenth's 25-foot par putt rolled over the left edge and he lipped out his bogey putt.

"I really wanted to win this," said Dusty. "It would have been a great story for me and my dad to win. This one hurts a lot. But it's golf and I'll keep playing and trying to learn from everything."

Peters was just thankful to be in the playoff after playing Sunday's front nine in 3-over 38 to Drenth's 1-under 34.

"That's one thing I've learned over the years is that it's never over until it's over," said Peters. "I've seen too many crazy things happen."

It did on Sunday, too. Peters birdied 12 and 13 and then chipped in for 2 from the fringe on the 400-yard par-4 16th. Meanwhile, Drenth double-bogeyed the par-4 15th. Also adding intrigue was what third-place finisher Ryan Sergeant (70-73=143) was doing. He fired a 2-under 33 on the front, but then an uncharacteristic mistake off the tee on No. 12 cost him two strokes with an out-of-bounds penalty that kept him from the weekend victory and would have alleviated the playoff.

Brad Hadley (73-71=144) and Ed Wikowski (70-74=144) rounded out the Top 5.

GOLF

QC Amateur Tour

Tour Championship

(at Crow Valley Golf Club, par 71)

Championship Flight

1, Ben Peters 72-70=142 (won on fourth playoff hole). 2, Dusty Drenth 70-72=142. 3, Ryan Sergeant 70-73=143. T4, Ed Wikowski 70-74=144. T4, Brad Hadley 73-71=144. T6, Joe Demory 69-76=145. T6, Steve Schwabe 71-74=145. 8, David Lawrence 71-75=146. 9, Peter Strothkamp 71-76=147. T10, Kirk Trede 70-78=148. T10, Joe Irwin 74-74=148. T10, Tyler Pitlik 76-72=148. T10, Brent Haydon 77-71=148.

14, Dave Holmes 74-75=149. T15, Adam Seitz 74-77=151. T15, Tim Flaherty 76-75=151. 17, Dave Schurke 76-76=152. 18, Kevin Lloyd 76-78=154. 19, Ryan VanDeRostyne 78-77=155. T20, Ron Wastyn 78-80=158. T20, Brian Soucinek 82-76=158. 22, Cole Ferguson 81-78=159. T23, Sean Cary 78-87=165. T23, Jon Wallace 80-85=165. T23, Dan Thompson 80-85=165. Eric Maloni 84-NS. Kee-Socrates Fryxell WD.

Seniors Flight

1, Mark Drenth 70-75=145. 2, Mike Long 73-76=149. 3, Dave Waugh 70-80=150. 4, Jody Peterson 75-76=151. 5, Preston Boyd 76-81=157. 6, Barry Black 82-81=163. T7, Doug Roelle 80-87=167. T7, Verne Keeney 85-82=167. 9, Dean Lackey 88-85=173. Jeff Gunderson 78-WD.