

USGA Champs Hagestad, Wilson Join Medalist Behr in Round of 32

By David Shefter, USGA

WHAT HAPPENED

Past champion Stewart Hagestad might have come up short of earning medalist honors in the 38th U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship, but the 2016 winner certainly didn't have any lingering hangovers from the disappointment. Buoyed by an eagle-2 on the fifth hole, the 2016 winner from Newport Beach, Calif., cruised to an 8-and-6 victory in the Round of 64 on Monday at Charlotte Country Club.

Hagestad, 27, joined reigning U.S. Senior Amateur champion Jeff Wilson, 55, of Fairfield, Calif., and stroke-play medalist Stephen Behr, 25, of Florence, S.C., in the next round. Wilson and Hagestad will square off in the Round of 32 on Tuesday morning.

The news wasn't as good for defending champion Matt Parziale. The 31-year-old firefighter from Brockton, Mass., saw his bid to become the third player to successfully defend his U.S. Mid-Amateur title end with a 3-and-2 loss to Andres Schonbaum, 27, of Argentina.

"I righted the ship and was able to get a little momentum coming into today," said Hagestad, who shared the 18-hole lead in stroke play only to come up four strokes shy of Behr. "Yeah, I played well today. Playing Jeff Wilson tomorrow, the best-kept secret on the West Coast up until like two weeks ago when he won the Senior Am.

"I am going to have to play really well [to beat Wilson]. I can't really even try to sugarcoat it. Jeff is really good. He hits it long, he chips it [well]. He's been known for his short game for forever and he hits it super far. Not even for his age, just like period."

Wilson, who last month at Eugene (Ore.) Country Club became the first medalist in 31 years to win the Senior Amateur, admittedly struggled to pull out a 2-and-1 victory over Josh Clay, 27, of North Canton, Ohio. The car dealer needed birdies on 15 and 17 to close out his younger opponent.

"It felt good to be in the position where I could do it," said Wilson, a two-time U.S. Mid-Amateur semifinalist (2001, 2002). "It wasn't very pretty out there."

Behr, the third-youngest competitor in this year's field who posted 5-under 137 in stroke play, held off Jeff Osberg, 34, of Bryn Mawr, Pa., the last qualifier from Monday's 16-for-12 playoff for the final match-play spots. After Osberg squared the match with a winning par on No. 8, Behr, a former second-team All-American at Clemson University, immediately won Nos. 9 and 10 with pars to take a 2-up lead. He closed out the match with another winning par on 16.

WHAT'S NEXT

Match play continues on Tuesday with the Rounds of 32 and 16. The quarterfinals and semifinals are scheduled for Wednesday, with the 36-hole championship match scheduled for Thursday.

FS1 will broadcast live from 4-6 p.m. EDT on Wednesday (semifinals) and Thursday (afternoon 18 of final).

Admission is free of charge.

NOTABLE

- The 16-for-12 playoff on Monday morning for the final match-play spots lasted two holes.
- With **Stephen Behr's** victory, the medalist(s) now owns a 53-13 record in Round-of-64 matches all-time in the U.S. Mid-Amateur.
- **Darin Goldstein**, of New York, N.Y., conceded his match to **Rusty Mosley**, of Vidalia, Ga., after nine holes due to a back injury. Mosley held a 3-up lead at the time of the concession.
- **Jeff Wilson's** victory moved him into a share of ninth all-time in match-play victories at the U.S. Mid-Amateur with 23. He is tied with 2017 U.S. Senior Amateur champion **Sean Knapp**, whom he defeated in last month's U.S. Senior Amateur final.
- **Scott Abbott**, of Dallas, Texas, rolled in a 27-foot birdie putt on No. 18, the statistically hardest hole in stroke play (4.55 average), to defeat **Danny Evelyn**, of Charlotte, N.C., 1 up.
- Besides Abbot, four other survivors from the Monday playoff advanced into the Round of 32, including 2013 stroke-play medalist **Matt Mattare**, of Jersey City, N.J., who ousted 2017 medalist and this year's No. 3 seed **Bradford Tilley**, of Easton, Conn., 2 and 1. **Frank Alafoginis**, **David Bolen** and **Sam O'Dell** also advanced. Bolen knocked out No. 2 seed **Rob Laird**, 2 and 1.
- The 8-and-7 triumph by **Kevin O'Connell**, of Cary, N.C., over **Nick Reardon**, of Columbus, Ohio, matched the third-largest in championship history. In the previous 37 Mid-Amateurs, there has been one 9-and-8 win and two 9-and-7 decisions.
- Three of the 32 matches went extra holes, with the 20-hole victory by **Matthew Sughrue**, of Arlington, Va., being the longest. Sughrue, the oldest player (age 59) to advance to match play at Charlotte Country Club, was the runner-up in the 2016 U.S. Senior Amateur. **Broc Haymon**, of Pearland, Texas, and **Miles McConnell**, of Tampa, Fla., both won in 19 holes.

QUOTABLE

Stewart Hagestad, of Newport Beach, Calif., (8-and-6 winner over Bradley Wohlers) on his eagle-2 at the fifth hole:

"I had a great number kind of going up the hill; it's a tough pin, and I knew I hit a really good wedge shot and it was kind of tracking right on the pin. I heard it. It hit the pin. I kind of thought that it would hit it and rip off the front...I guess it probably hit near the bottom [of the hole] and ended up going in. [The ball] tore up the cup so they had to cut a new one. They recut it kind of closer to the left side of the green, which is really tough. So I guess I'm sorry to the [USGA championship staff] and the rest of the guys behind me."

Stephen Behr, of Florence, S.C. (3-and-2 winner over Jeff Osberg) on the pressure of being medalist:

"It's all about what you make of it. Of course, you don't want to medal and then get put out in the first round, which I feel like happens in a lot of these events because the person who medaled usually plays a little bit defensively and the person that gets in the playoff has some momentum. I just tried to stay in control of things that I can control, and that's what I focused on. I mentally executed a lot of shots out there today."

Andres Schonbaum, of Argentina (3-and-2 winner over Matt Parziale) on knocking off the defending champion:

"I met him in Argentina where I am from in the South American Am [in January]. I played [the U.S. Mid-Amateur] last year. I knew how good he was. But I'm playing well and I knew I could beat him."

Defending champion Matt Parziale, of Brockton, Mass., on his reign coming to an end:

"I didn't play badly, but I didn't play well enough to win today. Andy played really well. Solid tee-to-green. When he missed a green he hit a good chip. He was pretty much mistake-free and I was only able to make one birdie to try to get it back. Then I made a mistake by flying the green on the 14th hole to go back to 2-down. A little too much to overcome. I had a blast. Great course and a lot of fun."

Steven Woodard, of Charlotte, N.C. (3-and-2 winner over Jeff Champine) on the pressure of playing the championship at a venue where he grew up playing:

"Yeah, there definitely is some, and then some folks following me that I work with and friends and family. I kind of kept seeing a few more. You want to do well for yourself, but you also want to play well for them... I think it's a big advantage. I really do. Just knowing some of the lines off the tees and where to potentially miss shots and where to putt from."

Matt Mattare, of Jersey City, N.J. (2-and-1 winner over 2017 medalist Bradford Tilley) on losing a 3-up lead before winning holes 16 and 17 to take the match:

"I mean, you just reset. You just remind yourself that you're here for a reason. You stay confident. Sometimes your confidence is shaken, but you just got to dig deep and figure it out."

Sam O'Dell, of Hurricane, W.Va. (4-and-2 winner over fourth-seeded Todd Mitchell) on how his dentistry practice helps his golf game:

"I think it makes me more patient. Honestly, that's what I would say. Throughout the day, you know, there are so many different things, especially as a general dentist. Seven years ago or whatever, I would get worked up over this or that. Now it's just do your best; stay calm ... so if I had to say anything that's probably what it was. The patients know me so well, so I get support from that, too. Now I think the most thing that helps me about being a dentist is just everyone knows me kind of in the area and my patients ... are always my biggest supporters."

Jeff Osberg, of Bryn Mawr, Pa., the last qualifier for match play, on the pressure of a playoff:

"It's like no pressure I've ever felt, especially with this many spots (12). When you wake up in the morning, you feel that you deserve one of those spots and it should be easier than a big playoff where there is just a few spots. You need to make a birdie and play aggressive. It's almost harder to think, maybe if I just make a par, I'm in. It's amazing how hard that is to do under the circumstances of just making a par and then you get to play later."

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