

JOHN CATLIN Wins Back-to-Back NCGA Amateur Championships



If this keeps up, NCGA Amateur champion John Catlin might never change his shirt.

Catlin captured his second NCGA Amateur title in as many years at Spyglass Hill in August, propelled by a sublime putting performance that upended Michael Weaver 5 and 3. The champion intentionally wore the same shirt as in 2010 when he defeated Scott Hardy in the 36-hole finale.

The 21-year-old rising junior at New Mexico carded a morning round of 67 to take a 2-up lead over Weaver, and finished the afternoon 5-under. All told, the North Ridge member produced 13 birdies on the day against two bogeys.

Catlin's back-to-back wins are the first since '92-'93 when Randy Haag accomplished the feat, only the 10th time in the 108-year history of the tournament.

"I just love this course," the champion said. "I feel so calm and confident out here. When you've got that and your swing is on, you'll be hard to beat."

Indeed, Catlin missed only one putt of any significance on the day, producing his lone bogey on the afternoon 18, on No. 10. But the miss seemed to refocus Catlin. His second shot into the 11th hole, a par 5, produced an eagle

putt of 10 feet that he just missed and his tee shot on the 12th missed going in

by inches. "Coming in I was putting well. But now I know these greens well. When you've got that confidence, the hole looks massive."

Despite the final margin, the match was one of the finest played in recent memory with Weaver finishing the day at four under, making nine birdies in the losing effort. There were a total of 21 birdies between the two players and five holes were halved with birdies. The twenty-somethings both carried their own bags most of the week (Catlin for a total of 127 holes, Weaver, 137).

Catlin drew first blood on the match with a birdie on Spyglass' treacherous fourth, holing a 15-footer for birdie what was a harbinger of things to come. The 2011 Memorial Amateur and Sacramento County champion then produced wins on the next two holes to build a 3-up lead. More spectacular putting followed, including a 20-footer on the ninth and 25-footer on No. 13. A Weaver birdie on the final hole of the morning 18 brought the match to 2-up.

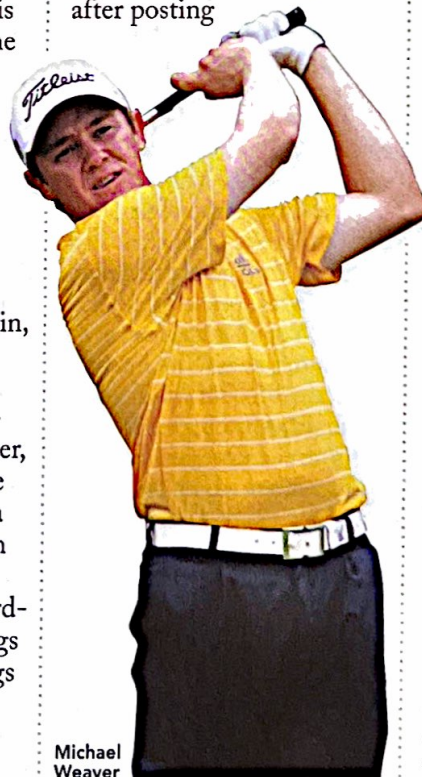
The afternoon round followed the same course as the morning with the champion walking off the ninth hole with a 4-up lead after posting

a nine-hole split of 33. Any chance of a comeback was squashed on the 14th hole. Catlin missed the green and blew his bunker shot over the putting surface to the short rough on the other side. He then holed the ensuing 20-footer, matching Weaver's par to go dormie. "That's just cold-blooded," one spectator remarked at the result.

"It's hard to beat someone who putts that well," Weaver said. "I can't be disappointed. I just didn't putt as well as him." Weaver, a Fresno resident and a rising junior at Cal, will redshirt next season while he changes his major. The 20-year-old defeated the ageless Randy Haag in the semifinals. The 52-year-old Haag made it to the quarterfinals for perhaps the 15th time in his storied career. In the quarterfinals, Weaver took out medalist Kevin Wentworth.

Catlin dominated the week. After securing the sixth seed, the champion rolled through match play, never playing the 18th hole and only playing 16 and 17 one time in a round of 16 win against Jeff Gilchrist. Spyglass Hill and the NCGA Amateur clearly provided inspiration, perhaps best symbolized by Catlin's lucky shirt.

"It's pretty special," he said regarding the white, striped top. "But I'll still wash it." 🏌️



Michael Weaver