

By Al Gregson (York Daily Record)

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The Zero Restriction War of the Roses singles matches were on Out Door Country Club's back nine and Lancaster captain Danny Scheurich was worried.

With York ahead in six matches, including the final four, after nine holes, it appeared as if Lance Smith's White Rose squad was about to erase Lancaster's overnight 2-point margin.

"We weren't hitting the fairways early, but we fought back on the back nine," Smith said. True, the Red Rose team led the other six matches at the halfway point.

However:

- (1) Grandview's Bob Ruby won four holes in a seven-hole stretch, the last with a conceded birdie on 17 to go dormie 1 on Rick Wise;
- (2) The host course's Bob Newcomer was about to win the last three holes from Ken Phillips to rescue a half-point;
- (3) Briarwood's Bill Brenner made up two holes on Andy Tompos to stand all square on the 16th tee;
- (4) South Hills' Matt Henry had battled back to even after No. 11 against Deryl Denlinger;
- (5) With his opponent 5 feet away from an almost-certain birdie on 12, John Lowder Jr. made a 30-foot bomb for an unlikely halve to maintain his 2-up lead on David Denlinger;
- (6) Dan Wolfe almost holed a long blast from the left bunker on 12 to keep the match square when Matt Burkhardt appeared poised to take a 1-up lead.

"Things are starting to turn around for them," Scheurich wailed to Tompos, his 60-year-old veteran and unofficial co-captain for the Red Roses. Tompos had hit his long approach putt too hard on 15 and watched it go off the green as Brenner squared their match. Now he was in a fairway bunker on 16 with Brenner safely on the par-5 green in three. From 90 yards away he blasted an awesome shot that had members of both sides cheering, the ball landing inside Brenner, 63, in this ageless match of the ages. Tompos made. Brenner missed to trail by one and couldn't make up the difference in the final two holes.

By then, Lancaster's Corey Gast had disposed of Brad Markey, 4 and 3, and CCY's Cary Walton had hung on for a 1-up win over Craig Kliewer. Wise won 18 to halve his match with Ruby but Ostrom, with five birdies, had his way with LANCO Player of the Year Jud Gemmill, 5 and 4. Bon-Air's Scott Knouse could never get it going against Dave Richards and absorbed a 3-an-2 defeat and Henry took Deryl Denlinger to the 17th before succumbing, 2 and 1.

It remained for Chris Esbenshade to secure the point that kept the trophy in Lancaster with a par on 16 for a 3-and-2 victory.

"It feels good," said the three-time participant. "I was 2-down at the turn." With the air out of the balloon, Lowder lost the last three holes to 18-year-old David Denlinger, a captain's pick along with his father Deryl, and Burkhardt, 17, overtook Wolfe for another 1-up win.

Lancaster's victory duplicated the Red Roses 15-9 decision 10 years ago at Out Door, the largest victory margins Lancaster has enjoyed against York. But it was much closer than that this time.

Lancaster has won four out of the last five years and leads in the series, 11-3, but York's 15.5 - 8.5 victory in 2006 remains the greatest margin of victory.

The 2009 event is scheduled for Foxchase Golf Club in Stevens, Lancaster County.