

Black Hall Assistants Shine at Connecticut PGA Assistants Championship



At times, they almost forgot what was at stake on Tuesday.

They were just two co-workers and roommates competing for bragging rights on the golf course.

"It was great," Eric Smith said. "It was like a backyard match. We live together, so we're always hanging out at the golf club together."

In the end, Adam Rainaud outlasted Smith, winning on the second playoff hole to earn his record fifth Connecticut Section PGA Assistants Championship title. Both golfers are assistant professionals at Black Hall Club in Old Lyme.

"That was pretty cool...," Rainaud said. "We had a little battle out there. It was pretty crazy, but that's the way it worked out. I was proud of how well he was playing. It was kind of different nerves-wise, because it was almost more like a grudge match. I don't know if we were thinking about what the tournament was."

Both Rainaud and Smith, who were deadlocked at 4-under 138 through 36 holes, qualified for the PGA Assistants Pro Championship set for Oct. 29 at the PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Rainaud, 29, entered Tuesday's tournament at Golf Club of Avon as the favorite, having never lost in four previous assistants championships. Both golfers were on their games. He couldn't shake Smith until the second playoff hole, sinking a 7-foot uphill par putt.

It will be difficult for anyone to top Rainaud's record of five straight titles. He's also the first to capture three in a row.

"That's pretty neat to think my name is on there more than anybody else," said Rainaud, who fired a 68 and 70. "I'm proud of myself that I've played five times and I've won it each time."

Rainaud also took great pride in the fact that it was the first time that two assistant pros from the same club finished first and second in the tournament.

For the 27-year-old Smith, it was his best finish in the assistants championship. He will be playing in his first national event.

"It was an accomplishment for me," said Smith, who's from Lancaster, Pa. "It's exciting. ... This was a major breakthrough."

Some pressure was lifted prior to the playoff because both golfers already had secured spots in the national event.

"We just had a good time with each other," said Smith, who had a 69 in each round. "I'm glad he won it. It was great. It was just a fun time for both of us. Either way, it was a success."

After the match, Rainaud, Smith and Old Lyme Country Club's Tim Shaw shared a ride home.

Both Rainaud and Smith will be back at work today at Black Hall. Rainaud has the morning shift.

"I guarantee he's not going to sleep well tonight," Smith said. "He's still pumped up. I'm pumped up as well. I get to sleep in and catch up on the sleep that we're going to be missing tonight."