



DOUBLE PLAY

While Frank Travetto earns senior honors, Todd Mitchell is, for the second time, the CDGA and Heartland Player of the Year in the same season

By Ed Sherman

The Chicago District Golf Association Player of the Year awards are based on a point system rewarding play in 25 association, state and national championships. This year, the CDGA and Senior awards came down to the final weeks of the season.

In the CDGA chase, 2007 champion John Ehr Gott led Mitchell by 65 points heading into the U.S. Mid-Amateur—for which both had qualified. Ehr Gott and Mitchell both advanced to match play, but Ehr Gott's loss in the second round opened the door for Mitchell. With four more

match-play victories, Mitchell earned 200 points more than Ehr Gott and won by a 135-point margin.

In the senior race, with a victory in the Illinois State Senior, coupled with Travetto's third-place finish, Tom Studer held a 10-point edge in the standings heading

into the final week. Studer competed in the Illinois Senior Open and failed to earn points with his 21st-place finish, while Travetto made match play and won twice at the U.S. Senior Amateur, earning 175 points and his first Senior Player of the Year award.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
HEARTLAND PLAYER OF THE YEAR

TODD MITCHELL

Todd Mitchell will be in front of his television next April to watch the Masters. And if somebody should happen to come up with a coveted grounds badge, Mitchell certainly will hop on the first plane to Augusta, Ga.

"I won't have any bittersweet feelings," Mitchell said.

Mitchell could be forgiven if he did because the Bloomington native came close to teeing it up with Tiger, Phil, Vijay and the rest of the gang in next year's Masters. He was one match-play victory away when he advanced to the final of the U.S. Mid-Amateur in River Hills, Wis., in September.

Since the mid-1980s the U.S. Mid-Amateur champion has received an invitation to the Masters, the ultimate destination

for any competitive golfer. Mitchell fell just short in the 36-hole final, losing to Steve Wilson of Mississippi, 5 and 4.

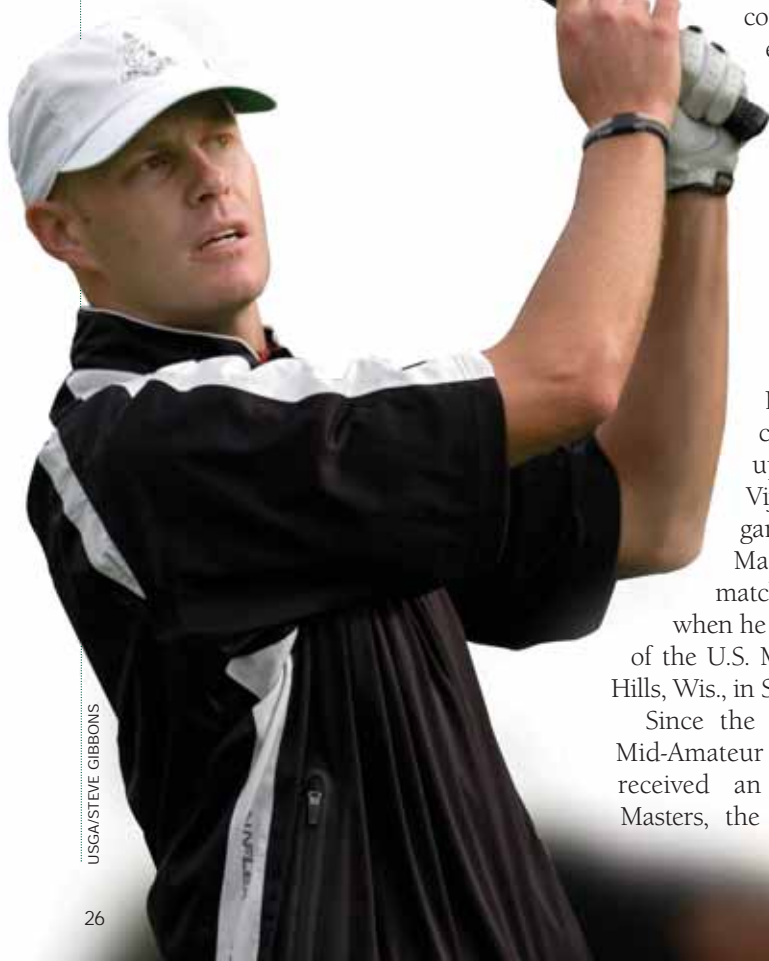
Mitchell insists he isn't thinking of what might have been. Instead, he is focusing on what he accomplished, and it is considerable. Being a finalist in the U.S. Mid-Amateur helped him be named the 2008 CDGA's Player of the Year and Heartland Player of the Year. It is the second time in three years that he received both honors; he did so in 2006.

This year, Mitchell won the Illinois State Mid-Amateur in May, and he missed advancing to match play at the U.S. Amateur in Pinehurst, N.C., by one shot.

"It's been a great year," said Mitchell, an insurance salesman. "(The U.S. Mid-Amateur) was the single best competitive experience I've ever had."

It was only Mitchell's second Mid-Amateur. He wasn't sure what to expect, but he liked his chances if he advanced to the 64-player match-play field, which he did by surviving a playoff. From that point, Mitchell said, it was a "whirlwind" with one match following another in rapid order (six matches in four days).

Unfortunately for Mitchell, he couldn't finish the job in the final. He won only four of the 32 holes played in



the scheduled 36-hole match.

"I made too many mistakes," he said. "When I would make a mistake, he seemed to capitalize. But when I had the chance, I couldn't make a putt. I wasn't as sharp as I would have liked. Playing that many days in a row, perhaps you're bound to have a bad day."

The runner-up finish puts him in the next three U.S. Mid-Amateurs and the 2009 U.S. Amateur at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla. Naturally, Mitchell will again be gunning for Augusta.

"It's something I'd like to have the opportunity to do," Mitchell said. "I'm only 30. I have a number of years to compete. If in 15 years this is my best finish, I'll have a great memory." 🏌️

SENIOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

FRANK TRAVETTO

Frank Travetto doesn't consider himself to be a "professional amateur."

Unlike most amateurs who play competitively at the highest level, he rarely practices and doesn't go into tournaments grinding with high expectations.

"I just go out and try to have a good time," Travetto said.

The resident of Bartlett had an excellent time this year. He won the CDGA Senior Amateur, tied for third at the Illinois State Senior Amateur and advanced to the round of 16 in the U.S. Senior Amateur. Those accomplishments earned him honors as the CDGA Senior Player of the Year.

Travetto thought he might fare well after turning 55, making him eligible for senior events.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR POINT TOTALS	
CDGA PLAYER OF THE YEAR	
1	TODD MITCHELL (BLOOMINGTON) 725
2	JOHN EHROTT (PEORIA) 590
3	CARLOS SAINZ (ELGIN) 470
4	TIM LYNCH (LAKE FOREST) 400
5	PHILLIP AROUCA (WILMETTE) 370
SENIOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR	
1	FRANK TRAVETTO (BARTLETT) 540
2	TOM STUDER (JOLIET) 375
3	TOMMY ROBINSON (RIVERWOODS) 235
4	BRAD BARKER (BLOOMINGTON) 165
5	VAN SALMANS (CHICAGO) 140
	RICK TEN BROECK (EVERGREEN PARK) ... 140
HEARTLAND PLAYER OF THE YEAR	
1	TODD MITCHELL (BLOOMINGTON) 925
2	JOHN EHROTT (PEORIA) 690
3	ZACH BARLOW (PERCY) 350
4	DAVE RYAN (TAYLORVILLE) 300
5	RICK LEHEW (BRIMFIELD) 150
	TOMMY BLIEFNICK (DECATUR) 150



Frank Travetto qualified for the U.S. Senior Amateur and made match play.

CDGA/BUZZ ORR

RECENT WINNERS			
	PLAYER OF THE YEAR	HEARTLAND PLAYER OF THE YEAR	SENIOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR
2001	RICH DUKELOW	ELSTON MITCHELL	JOEL HIRSCH
2002	SCOTT HARRINGTON	TIM SHEPPARD	FRED LUKASIK
2003	JAY DEMPSEY	TODD MITCHELL	FRED LUKASIK
2004	TC FORD	RICK LEHEW	JOHN SEEHAUSEN
2005	BRIAN CARROLL	TODD MITCHELL	RICK TEN BROECK
2006	TODD MITCHELL	TODD MITCHELL	RICK TEN BROECK
2007	JOHN EHROTT	JOHN EHROTT	TOM STUDER
2008	TODD MITCHELL	TODD MITCHELL	FRANK TRAVETTO

Travetto's showing in 2008 definitely gives him confidence going into 2009. But will it change his approach to golf?

"Absolutely not," Travetto said. "I'm not going to have higher aspirations. My goal is to go out and have fun and be a fun guy to play with." 🏌️

Ed Sherman is a recently retired golf writer for the Chicago Tribune.