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FOUR-BALL STABLEFORD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP
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Final-hole Birdie propels Steve Schneiter and Rick Schuller to Four-Ball Stableford Team Championship

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PGA of America

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PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (Feb. 5, 2019) - Steve Schneiter has been in the crosshairs many times before, grinding his way to a championship. Yet, it all seemed eerie for Rick Schuller, recalling on a warm, tranquil Tuesday at PGA Golf Club how often he was Schneiter's chaser.

Three years ago, Schuller watched Schneiter par the 18th hole of the PGA Golf Club's Wanamaker Course to beat him for the 2016 Senior PGA Professional Championship. But this day, as partners in the Four-Ball Stableford Team Championship, they blended like fine wine.

Schneiter, a PGA Assistant Professional at Schneiter's Pebblebrook Golf Course in Sandy, Utah, rolled home an eight-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole of the Dye Course to clinch the title and share a \$10,000 first-place prize. Schneiter and Schuller, a PGA Teaching Professional at Stonehenge Golf and Country Club in Richmond, Virginia, closed the 54-hole event with 45 points based upon 20 birdies, one eagle and no bogeys.

"I love competing with Steve more than against him," said Schuller, the 2009 PGA Professional Player of the Year. "He's a grinder and he never gives up and will be there at the end. We've competed against each other to know each other's strengths. We share common interests outside of golf."

That closing birdie putt was worth two points in the Stableford scoring format, boosting Schneiter and Schuller past two duos deadlocked at 43 points - defending champions Mark Brown of Oyster Bay, New York and Joshua Rackley, Brookville, New York; and Gary Trivisonno, Aurora, Ohio and Dwayne Randall, Clymer, New York.

Schuller praised his partner for his signature grit, and for finding a way to play through pain and uncertainty of a near-tragic injury. Last year, Schneiter - the 1995 PGA Professional Champion - had his right index finger nearly severed in a maintenance accident while working as superintendent at his family's golf course. The tendons and nerves, he said, haven't healed well.

"I still have therapy on the finger," said Schneiter. "It gets numb as we go through the round. I can see the shots, but I can't quite get through them. You put so much pressure on the forefinger, especially as a right-handed player."

Schneiter and Schuller found their groove on the Dye Course, where they totaled 34 points over their final 36 holes. In the final round, they combined for seven birdies - including three straight by Schuller from Holes 5 through 7.

They credited their opponents in their foursome - Adam Rainaud of Chester, Connecticut, and Scott Berliner of Sebastian, Florida, for pushing them. Rainaud and Berliner finished fifth with 41 points.

“We knew we needed to get a pair of birdies on two of the final three holes,” said Schuller. “We both missed our chances on No. 16, then Steve nearly chips in for eagle on 17. I don’t know how it didn’t go in. At 18, I limped my putt up there for a four and gave him the green light special.”

Schneiter hit a 52-degree sand wedge from 115 yards that came to rest eight feet from the hole. Keeping the flagstick in as part of one of the new 2019 Rules of Golf, Schneiter ran the putt home. “I was shaking,” he said with a grin.

Ohioans Gary Robison of Canton and Mitchell Camp of Aurora, who shared runner-up honors in 2017, finished sixth despite the day’s best combined performance. They posted a + 21 in a round featuring eight birdies and an eagle. Robison is the PGA Director of Golf at Brookside Country Club in Canton, while Camp is the PGA Head Professional at Club Walden in Aurora.

“We finally made some putts,” said Robison, who hit a 2-hybrid on the par-5 10th hole to 10 feet and made the eagle putt. “We have been playing together for a long time and have enjoyed this championship.”

Joanna Coe of Baltimore, Maryland, who partnered with Greg Pieczynski of Kingston, Pennsylvania, finished tied for 13th place at +34. Coe was one of five women entered in the Championship.

The Four-Ball Stableford Team Championship featured a total purse of \$69,000.

The PGA Winter Championships are presented by GolfAdvisor.com and PrimeSport.

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