**2015 Champion Lutz Among Final Eight at C.C. of Detroit**

By David Shefter, USGA

**What Happened**

Thirteen USGA champions began the week at the Country Club of Detroit for the 66th U.S. Senior Amateur. Just one remains.

Chip Lutz, the 2015 U.S. Senior Amateur champion from Reading, Pa., won a pair of matches on Tuesday to earn a spot in the quarterfinals for the sixth time in 11 championship starts. Lutz, who hasn’t had a match go beyond the 16th hole in the first three rounds, defeated Eddie Hargett, of Blythewood, S.C., 3 and 2, after knocking off Jim Muething, of Cincinnati, Ohio, 6 and 5, in the Round of 32 in the morning.

Lutz, the No. 2 seed, will take on a familiar face in Wednesday’s quarterfinals: Craig Davis, of Chula Vista, Calif. Davis, who defeated Lewis Stephenson, of Mansfield, Texas, 3 and 2, in the Round of 16 on Tuesday, lost to Lutz in the 2018 quarterfinals at Eugene (Ore.) Country Club, 1 up.

“I try not to pay too much attention [to the other results] because everybody is a good player at this level,” said Lutz, who upped his Senior Amateur match-play record to 28-9. “I try not to think about mapping [my bracket] out or seeing who is in front of you because things change so quickly.”

Lutz and Davis are joined in the final eight by Rusty Strawn, of McDonough, Ga.; Jerry Gunthorpe, of Ovid, Mich.; Dave Bunker, of Canada; 2021 U.S. Senior Open low amateur Billy Mitchell, of Atlanta, Ga.; Tom Gieselman, of Commerce Township, Mich.; and Gene Elliott, of West Des Moines, Iowa.

The two remaining Michigan golfers are hoping to continue the momentum of James Piot, a Michigan State standout from Canton, Mich., who won the U.S. Amateur at Oakmont Country Club two weeks ago. Gieselman, a member of nearby Oakland Hills Country Club, had a number of friends, family and club members following his Round-of-16 match, a 1-up win over Joe Jaspers, of Huntersville, N.C. He walked off the 18th green Tuesday afternoon to a loud ovation.

Earlier in the day, Jaspers knocked out third seed and 2017 champion Sean Knapp, of Oakmont, Pa., 2 and 1.

Gunthorpe, competing in just his second USGA championship, eliminated James Scorse, of Churchville, N.Y., 4 and 3, in the Round of 16 after a tight 1-up win over Brad Wayment, of Mesa, Ariz., in the morning.

Elliott might have had the most challenging day of the eight. In the morning, he needed 19 holes to oust his good friend and fellow Iowan, Michael McCoy. The two Iowa Golf Hall of Famers have competed in a combined 100 USGA championships and won 15 Iowa Player of the Year awards.

Elliott converted an 18-foot par putt on the 18th hole to force extra holes after short-siding himself in a bunker with his approach. On the first extra hole, he stuffed his approach to 2 feet and was conceded the birdie after McCoy, the 2013 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion, missed his long attempt.

In the Round of 16 on Tuesday afternoon, Elliott, a veteran of 36 USGA championship who won this year’s British Seniors Amateur, had to face 2013 U.S. Senior Amateur champion Doug Hanzel, of Savannah, Ga., who owns a 22-7 match-play mark in eight starts. Elliott finally seized control of a nip-and-tuck match with a winning par on the 181-yard, par-3 13th hole and closed the match with five consecutive pars, including a two-putt from 20 feet on the 420-yard 18th. Hanzel played most of the match with an ailing left hip sustained early in the round.

“Mike McCoy is tough as nails and so is Doug Hanzel,” said Elliott. “You just have to get some breaks. I made some mistakes, they made some mistakes. I thought I was toast on 18 against Mike. It was a long day, but a great day.”

Strawn also appeared to be eliminated by Jim Lehman, of Minnetonka, Minn., the older brother of 1996 British Open champion Tom Lehman. Lehman was 2 up with two to play, but lost the par-5 17th to a Strawn birdie and missed a 6-foot par putt on 18 that would have sent him to the quarters. Three holes later, Strawn prevailed by holing a 15-foot birdie putt.

Strawn will face Gunthorpe in the first quarterfinal match, while Bunker meets Mitchell, the low amateur in the 2021 U.S. Senior Open who eliminated defending champion and fellow Georgian Bob Royak in the Round of 32, 1 up, and then took out Tim Peterson, of Forest Lake, Minn., 4 and 3. Bunker, the only international golfer to make match play, defeated last-minute alternate Daniel Russo, of Hagaman, N.Y., 4 and 3, to reach his first-ever USGA quarterfinal.

**What’s Next**

The championship continues on Wednesday with the quarterfinal and semifinal matches, beginning at 8 a.m. EDT and 1:30 p.m., respectively. Thursday’s 18-hole championship match is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. The event is open to the public and there is no cost to attend.

**Notable**

All eight quarterfinalists are exempt into the 67th U.S. Senior Amateur Championship set for Aug. 27-Sept. 1 at The Kittansett Club in Marion, Mass.

Quarterfinalist **Jerry Gunthorpe**, of Ovid, Mich.,didn’t play any national events for many years while raising his family, including two golf-playing boys, **Nathan** and **Nick.** In 2019, Jerry qualified for his first USGA championship (U.S. Senior Amateur) and Nick got into the U.S. Mid-Amateur. Nick caddied for Jerry at Old Chatham Golf Club and Jerry caddied for Nick at Colorado Golf Club. Nathan also qualified for the 2006 U.S. Amateur at Hazeltine National Golf Club.

This is only the second time in **Gene Elliott’s** illustrious career he has made a USGA quarterfinal. The other was the 2006 U.S. Mid-Amateur.

**Bob Royak’s** bid to become the first player to successfully defend his U.S. Senior Amateur title in 41 years came to a halt in the Round of 32 with a 1-up defeat to fellow Georgian **Billy Mitchell**.

Moments after that match concluded, **Roger Newsom**, who was defeated by Royak in the 2019 final, was eliminated in 20 holes by **Tim Peterson**. Peterson got into the field as an alternate from the Minneapolis (Minn.) Golf Club qualifier. It was the second consecutive extra-holes match for the Forest Lake, Minn., resident. He eliminated two-time U.S. Mid-Amateur champion **Tim Jackson** in 21 holes on Monday.

The Cinderella run for No. 64 seed **Kory Frost** came to an end in the Round of 32 with a 3-and-1 loss to **Rusty Strawn**. Frost took out record-tying medalist **Tim Hogarth** on Monday in 21 holes.

**Quotable**

“I haven’t done that terrific [in USGA events]. I’m 59 and I am still plugging away at the USGA. I kept telling myself, what you are doing obviously works. I have had success in other places. Just keep doing it and hopefully good things happen.” – **Gene Elliott** on seeking an elusive USGA title in his 36th start

“I may go home and fall asleep before I can grill a steak. It’s great. I’ll be able to see my other son (Danny). He’ll be home and I can’t wait to tell him about it.” – **Tom Gieselman** after advancing to the quarterfinals not far from his residence in Commerce Township

“Bob beat me in the Round of 16 at Old Chatham when he won [in 2019]. It seems like we don’t avoid each other in match-play scenarios, either at home or here. It was a good match, and I was fortunate to come out on top.” – **Billy Mitchell** on beating defending champion **Bob Royak** in the Round of 32

“We play all the time together. We play practice rounds together. We play a lot of GSGA (Georgia State Golf Association) together. … I hit the ball pretty good today. I just didn’t get the ball in the hole the way I should have. Just a little frustrated right now.” – **Royak** after falling to fellow Atlanta-area competitor and good friend **Mitchell**

“We have a lot of respect for each other’s games. Gene has really gotten out and competed a lot since he’s become a senior. So I think his game has improved over the last three or four years just because he’s played so much. I admire him for doing that. Nothing would make me happier than to see him go on and win.” – **Michael McCoy** after a 19-hole defeat to his close friend and fellow Iowan **Gene Elliott** in the Round of 32

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