



# Wang leaves with a bang

Cypress resident becomes youngest Mid-Amateur winner days before turning professional, shooting the only sub-par total at Mesa Verde CC

Text and photos by Mike Peck

**E**ric Wang of Cypress made his final amateur tournament a memorable one with a remarkably consistent final round of 17 pars and one birdie to win the 20th SCGA Mid-Amateur Championship by three shots at Mesa Verde CC.

The 25-year-old Wang, whose first professional effort was the California State Open the week after the Mid-Am, was the only player in red numbers for the 54-hole event with rounds of 70-69-69 — 208, 2-under-par (the course was played at par-70, instead of the listed 71 as the 465-yard opening hole was played as a 4-par for the event). He finished three shots in front of second-round leader Clay Long of Carlsbad, who stumbled at the start with bogeys on

*Eric Wang's deft touch kept him out of trouble all day long and earned him a three-stroke win at the 20th SCGA Mid-Amateur Championship.*



*Pat Mateer spotted the field a first round 76, then played 4-under-par golf the rest of the way, but lost his chance at the title with a tee shot in the lake at No. 18.*



*Don DuBois made birdie with the help of this downhill lie bunker shot at the sixth hole, but saw his first round co-lead dilute to a tie for fifth place.*

the first two holes and never made a birdie on the day. Long finished with rounds of 68-69-74 — 211, a shot in front of Pat Mateer of Mission Viejo.

Wang, who won the tournament the first year he was age-eligible (and became its youngest-ever winner at 25), was in a horse race with Mateer and Long for most of the day.

Mateer, a 49-year-old Mission Viejo resident who runs Championship Golf tours, made an early run at the course record of 64. He canned a 54-degree wedge shot from 101 yards out to make eagle 2 on the sixth hole then birdied the par-3 10th hole to go 5-under-par for the day.

But any dreams for his first SCGA title found a watery grave. Trailing by a single stroke Mateer bogied the par-four 17th hole when he left a seven-foot par putt an inch short, then put his tee shot on the 200-yard, par-3 finishing hole into the water and made double-bogey 5. Although Mateer finished with a second consecutive round of 2-under-par 68, it was not enough to offset a 76 in the opening round and he finished at 2 over par for the tournament.

Wang made two bogeys in each of the two rounds, but made no miscues the third time around, “I drove the ball well today,” said Wang afterward, “I didn’t give myself many chances to get into trouble and I didn’t three-putt all week.” The only time a real danger loomed for the winner was at the 390-yard ninth hole, when his tee shot hooked left into an adjacent fairway. He cleared a large tree and the water hazard with his approach from 145 yards with an eight iron and two-putted from 30 feet for yet another par.

Wang entered the tournament almost as an afterthought. “I decided to enter because it’s just a few minutes from my house,” said Wang after his final round. “I got to sleep in my own bed, which is always a plus.”

After the California Open, Wang — a former UC Irvine student — will attempt to qualify for the nationwide Tour stop at Empire Lakes, then try the Canadian PGA Tour School later this year.

While he played for UCI’s NCAA finals qualifier in his senior year, four top 10 finishes were the apex of his college career. He also played high school golf at Cypress High. Since college, he’s been working long hours at an electronics firm and finally decided to get out to the golf course a little more often. At the 2002 Long Beach Open, he was low amateur, finishing 11th at 10-under-par. That kind of reward for increased play fueled his decision to try the play-for-pay ranks.

This year was the sixth of holding a 54-hole championship for the Mid-Amateur and the first time there’s been a different leader after every round. A total of 43 golfers made the cut of 152. 36-hole leader Clay Long wasn’t sure how he would play early Monday morning with his right arm hurting.

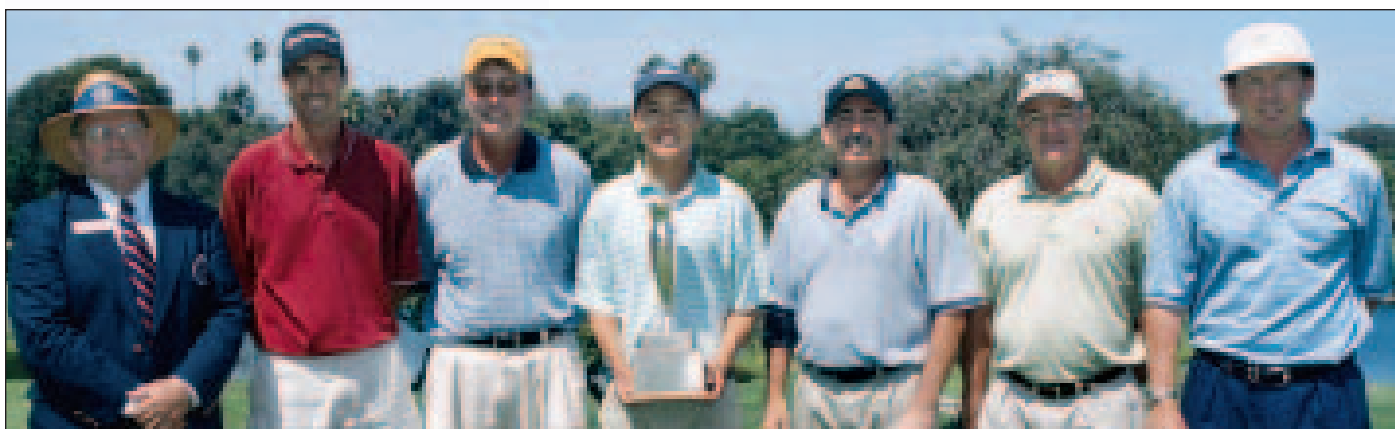
“Armed” with some anti-inflammatory medicine and

*continued on page 12*

*John O'Donnell's second round was 11 shots off his first-round co-lead, but he ended up with a share of 10th place that puts him in next year's Mid-Am field.*



*Top finishers in the 20th SCGA Mid-Amateur championship are joined by SCGA director Ed Holmes (left). They are Brian Bazzel, Pat Mateer, champion Eric Wang, Craig Steinberg, Clay Long and Don DuBois.*



## 20<sup>TH</sup> SCGA MID-AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

### AT MESA VERDE CC

6,712 yards; par 70

### FINAL 54-HOLE RESULTS:

208 — Eric Wang, Cypress, 70-69-69.  
 211 — Clay Long, Carlsbad, 68-69-74.  
 212 — Pat Mateer, Mission Viejo, 76-68-68.  
 214 — Brian Bazzel, Carlsbad, 73-66-75.  
 215 — Don DuBois, Montecito, 67-71-77;  
 Craig Steinberg, Oak Park, 75-71-69.  
 216 — Steve Lass, Santa Barbara, 73-71-72;  
 James Meyer, Dana Point, 70-73-73.  
 217 — Eddie Heinen, Las Vegas, NV 72-74-71.  
 218 — John O'Donnell, Los Angeles, 67-78-73;  
 Michael Turner, Sherman Oaks, 73-71-74;  
 Greg Uberuaga, San Diego, 71-73-74.  
 219 — Robert Funk, Canyon Lake, 74-76-69;  
 Barret Johnson, Bermuda Dunes, 69-77-73;  
 Jim Ream Jr, Cerritos, 71-71-77.  
 220 — Scott Almquist, Santa Ana, 72-72-76;  
 Robert Caton, Laguna Niguel, 74-77-69;  
 Dan Jennings, Los Angeles, 71-76-73;  
 Joe Sanders, La Quinta, 77-72-71.  
 221 — Gregory Hetzer, San Pedro, 75-74-72.  
 222 — Kieth Kinsel, Glendale, 73-75-74;  
 Rick Martin, San Marcos, 78-73-71.  
 223 — Mel Collins, Long Beach, 74-75-74;  
 Steve Nichols, Murrieta, 78-71-74.  
 224 — John Balfanz, Bakersfield, 71-81-72;  
 Mark

Etue, Carlsbad, 77-73-74; Ted Lyford, Redlands, 76-74-74; Andrew Nelsen, Laguna Niguel, 74-76-74.  
 225 — Patrick Carrigan, Alhambra, 75-74-76; Howie Knodt, Chula Vista, 73-77-75;  
 Scott McGihon, Bermuda Dunes, 73-78-74; Michael Rowley, San Luis Obispo, 76-75-74;  
 Nick Ushijima, Coto De Caza, 74-74-77.  
 226 — Harry Freund, Yorba Linda, 77-73-76;  
 David Herzog, Palmdale, 73-77-76; Dale Keene, Bakersfield, 76-75-75.  
 227 — Tim Hogarth, Northridge, 73-78-76;  
 King Wilder, Pasadena, 70-76-81.  
 229 — John Mack, Alta Loma, 76-74-79;  
 Kemp Richardson, Laguna Niguel, 74-78-77.  
 230 — Don Baker, Woodland Hills, 76-73-81.

### FAILED TO QUALIFY FOR FINAL ROUND:

153 — Dan Anderson, San Diego, 75-78;  
 Rick Nolan, Trabuco Canyon, 80-73;  
 John Pate, Santa Barbara, 75-78;  
 Mark Rossi, La Verne, 77-76;  
 Masao Sugimoto, San Diego, 80-73.  
 154 — Johnny Holmes, Riverside, 77-77;  
 Ed Susolik, Newport Beach, 75-79;  
 Jim Vallone, San Dimas, 70-84.  
 155 — William Coleman, Huntington Beach, 78-77;  
 Neil Moore, Redondo Beach, 74-81;  
 Pete Roberts, Carlsbad, 80-75;  
 Ivan Samuels,

Palm Desert, 73-82.  
 156 — Steven Hakes, San Diego, 73-83;  
 Michael Marmer, Wilmington, 76-80;  
 Pat McDonald, Oxnard, 79-77;  
 Eugene Medlock, Westlake Village, 80-76;  
 Paul Rice, Redlands, 75-81;  
 Bob Valerio, Hawthorne, 75-81.

157 — Dane Chapin, Encinitas, 76-81;  
 Mark Corley, San Diego, 77-80;  
 Gary Donovan, Cathedral City, 80-77;  
 John Massar, Pasadena, 76-81.  
 158 — David Sand, Pismo Beach, 77-81;  
 Marcus Schonabaum, Canyon Lake, 76-82.  
 159 — Doug Higgins, Oceanside, 81-78.  
 160 — Blake Orgill, Murrieta, 79-81.  
 161 — Kyle Frost, Burbank, 81-80.  
 162 — Dick Engel, Quartz Hills, 85-77;  
 Charles Lee, Glendale, 84-78.  
 164 — Jay Ball, Anaheim Hills, 79-85;  
 Ralph Defay, Poway, 84-80;  
 Dennis Reiland, Irvine, 76-88.  
 165 — James Conter, Murrieta, 83-82;  
 David Franey, Newport Beach, 78-87.  
 166 — Mike Portman, Santa Maria, 82-84.  
 167 — Scott Stratton, Rancho Santa Fe, 87-80.  
 168 — David Blunk, Midway City, 81-87;  
 Scott Weller, Manhattan Beach, 81-87.

**WD** — John Hoffman, San Diego; Cornell Beans, Tustin; Scott Anderson, Palmdale, Chris Etue, Chatsworth.

*Clay Long fended off a sore right arm for a second-place finish.*



*A familiar face in the upper echelon of Mid-Amateur finishers: Craig Steinberg.*



steady golf, the 51-year-old golf club designer from Carlsbad fired rounds of 68-69 — 137, 3-under-par, to take a one-shot lead over another veteran amateur, Don DuBois of Montecito.

Long, an independent golf club designer currently working with the Nicklaus Golf Company, had four birdies in the morning and three birdies in the afternoon. He also posted two bogies in each round. "I didn't even know if I could pick up a club," said Long after his second round, "but that medicine really did the trick." Medicine of another sort arrived when Long found out his runner-up finish earned him exemption into the California Amateur (as well as next year's Mid-Amateur at Pauma Valley and the 2004 SCGA Amateur championship. "That's great," he exclaimed. "I've never played Pebble Beach."

DuBois, fresh from qualifying for match play at the U.S. Amateur, was a co-leader after an opening-round 67, but he slipped to a 1-over-par 71 in the afternoon, a shot back of Long. John O'Donnell of Los Angeles also posted a 67 in the morning, but skied to a 78 in the afternoon to fall from contention.

Only four golfers managed to break par at Mesa Verde on a day when afternoon winds had golfers struggling. A notable exception was Brian Bazzel of Carlsbad who had a 36-hole total of 139 after a dazzling 66 in the afternoon. He finished alone in fourth with a final-round 75. It was no surprise to see two-time champion (and four-time SCGA Amateur winner) Craig Steinberg around for a share of the hardware at the end, crafting a 69 to finish in a tie for fifth with DuBois.

*FORE Magazine Editor and Publisher Bob Thomas contributed to this article.*

*Wang encountered few problems in the final round, but when he did, his putter helped solve them.*

