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WSGA STATE GOLF LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

## SentryWorld men crowned first champions



Bill Neuman has nothing but praise for the Wisconsin State Golf Association's newest tournament, the State Golf League Championship.

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that he and his three team members from SentryWorld GC in Stevens Point were champions in late September of the first-ever event, held at Merrill Hills CC in Waukesha. But it's more likely that he truly was impressed.

"The tournament was extremely well run; the people at Merrill Hills could not have been more gracious and more professional," Neuman said. "The course was in great condition. I had never played there before, but it's a beautiful golf course. We had a great time. The WSGA people were great."

The WSGA this year started providing its member clubs with a Web site and software to manage their golf leagues, and 33 leagues at nine courses used the system. Basically, a league secretary can log in and enter scores, and players have immediate Web access to standings and results.

"In the past we'd wait until the following Wednesday and then we were given a printed handout with our results. This was far, far better," Neuman said while talking about the WSGA golf league management system. "It's an amazing Web site. They have a lot of detail and a lot of information. We were able to get the results faster than we were before, and it worked out well. It's excellent software."

Neuman's Wednesday afternoon league at SentryWorld was run using a "two net bestball out of four" format, which means that the two best scores out of four are recorded on each hole. The championship event in September was formatted the same way.

"We're relatively high handicappers ... and by the way we play, (this format) really works out well for us," Neuman said. "On a typical hole, two of us will do really well and two of us won't because we're high handicappers. It works out really well for what I would call average golfers."

The purpose of the 2008 WSGA State Golf League Championship was to crown a champion of all the state's golf league players who use the WSGA system. Neuman and team members Bob Allen, Bob Prosch and Ron Odejewski finished with a net score of 123 after firing rounds of 56-67. They beat out 19 other teams from men's and women's leagues, though only one team of women played, at six courses across the state.

"Our gross scores, frankly, were not much to brag about," Neuman said. "But the team format just worked out extremely well for us, as it has all year."

Tied for second at 125 were B.J. Hangartner, Bill Hangartner, Terry Radtke and Joe Dufran of Muskego Lakes CC (60-65) and Mark Allen, Mike Klotz, Mike Amerling and Paul Ley of West Bend Lakes GC (57-68).

According to David Cohn at the WSGA, the association's goal is to expand use of the golf league management system to more courses across the state, which, in turn, would expand the championship field. It's part of the WSGA's ongoing quest to grow the game of golf in Wisconsin and is a way of reaching out to golfers who may not know what services the WSGA has to offer.

The State Golf League Championship was the first WSGA event in which Neuman, Allen and Odejewski had played. The fourth member of the team, Prosch, has competed in several WSGA events and convinced his team members to enter this one. All participating leagues were eligible to enter one four-person team in the championship, though some were allowed more because there were open slots in the field.

Depending on the results of their 2009 league season, the SentryWorld men, who were sponsored by the Elizabeth Inn in Plover, plan to play in the championship again next year.

"It's a great league and a great format for us," Neuman said. "We just kind of played it loose and had a good time, and it worked out real well all year and especially at Merrill Hills."

— Becky LaPlante