

PRIMAVERA EDGES FORMER COACH FOR SHERMAN TITLE

By [PAT MCCANN | News Herald Executive Sports Editor](#)

LYNN HAVEN — The player outlasting the coach on Sunday was the feel-good story line for the 82nd Sherman Invitational at Panama Country Club.

Zach Primavera, a former Mosley standout, made par on the second playoff hole to defeat five-time Sherman winner Mike Riley, the Dolphins boys golf coach.

But the annual amateur tournament, even though reduced to 36 holes from its accustomed 54 for the Championship Flight, was just as much a battle of survival. Testy conditions with swirling, gusting winds made it as much, as 1-under-par 141 was the lowest score posted. Even after seven men had tied with 1-under-71s during the opening round on Saturday. That meant none of the leaders bettered par on Sunday. Primavera and Riley both said that was no accident. "It was a grind," said Primavera, 20, a college sophomore. "But against my old high school coach, it was fun."

Riley said the PCC layout played even harder during the second round, "especially around the greens." Mike Brown was the only player in the Championship Flight to break par, shooting the low round of the tournament with a 2-under 70. Primavera had an eagle putt of 12 feet on the 36th hole to avoid a playoff. It didn't touch the hole, and he needed about 30 inches coming back to secure the playoff. "That's how I putted all day long," he said.

Playing in the foursome ahead of Primavera's, Riley narrowly missed an eagle putt of 40 feet. "It rolled right over the low side of the hole," Riley said. "I thought I had made it, That gave me goose bumps." They nearly were joined by Si Clemo in the playoff. Like Primavera and Riley, he came to the par-5 18th even par for the tournament. Clemo bunkered his approach, then gave himself a chance for birdie with a fine shot out of the sand, but his bold attempt slid past.

Defending champion Richard Maddox and Ben Perdue also were in contention on the back side. Maddox took himself out of it when he went into the trees on the par-4 16th and got a bad break when his ball kicked out of bounds. He wound up having to sink a 15-foot putt for double-bogey. Perdue went long and found the cart path on the same hole and was left with a treacherous chip to a green sloping away. He made bogey to effectively end his run. Perdue tied for fourth with Chase Seiffert at 145, Maddox and Matt Johnson another stroke back.

Primavera and Riley started the playoff on No. 18, Riley hit his approach into the trap guarding the left side, while Primavera was short right, with not much green to work with. When Riley came out of the sand within 5 feet, the pressure shifted to Primavera, and he responded by chipping within tap-in distance. "That was extremely key," Primavera said. "When Coach is within 6 feet he doesn't miss." The playoff moved to the 446-yard par 4 first hole, and Riley's tee shot left him nearly 50 yards behind his former pupil. He hit a hybrid into the lingering twilight, and although he struck it solid came up short.

Primavera's 7-iron from 158 yards was pin high to the left of the flag. "I really couldn't see it," he said. "I had to look with my range finder to see how close it was." When Riley's deft short game abandoned him on a botched chip, Primavera basically needed two putts for the title. That's what happened when Riley missed a 20-footer for par. "He's solid, a tough competitor," Riley said of the champion, who represented a youth movement in this year's Sherman. Four of the top five finishers are age 24 or younger.

"This was strictly about business for me this year," Primavera said, perhaps recalling his final-round failure last year after building a healthy lead on the front nine. "I hate playoffs, but it worked out for me."