

Summary: The PGA Tour pro wins the tournament for the second time in three years with a 2-under-par 70 in the final round at Heron Lakes Golf Course

Fred **Couples'** golf rounds occasionally enter the twilight zone, and such was the case Sunday at Heron Lakes Golf Course.

The long-hitting PGA Tour pro from Palm Beach, Fla., did a little bit of everything as he scored a 3-shot victory in the \$138,200 G.I. Joe's/Thriftway **Northwest Open**.

**Couples**, winning the tournament for the second time in three years, closed with a 2-under-par 70 over the 6,657-yard combination of the course's white and red nines. That left him at 6-under 210 for 54 holes.

“A couple of unusual things happened out there,” **Couples** said with a smile.

Greg Whisman of Everett, Wash., rode a 69 to second place at 213. At one point, he got to 4-under and within a shot of **Couples** before a pair of bogeys stalled his charge.

Todd O'Neal, the assistant pro from Twin Lakes Country Club in Federal Way, Wash., who led after the first round, battled back to third place with a 70 for 214.

“I feel especially good about today after that 77 I shot Saturday,” the 24-year-old O'Neal said.

O'Neal lost a chance to tie for second when he three-putted from long range at the 413-yard 18th hole for his only bogey of the day.

**Couples**, who earned \$25,000, started the final round with a one-shot lead over Prineville pro Pat Fitzsimons. He never was out of the top spot as about 4,500 spectators watched.

Birdies on the first two holes got him to 6-under and he stayed at either 6-under or 5-under the rest of the way.

His twilight-zone visits came on three par-5 holes -- the 503-yard fourth, the 525-yard 12th and the 511-yard 17th. He parred them all but those who witnessed the action probably never will understand how.

At the fourth, **Couples** went for the green in two over a lake. He didn't make it, but he saved his par with a 15-foot putt.

At the 12th, his 3-wood second shot hit a mound to the left of the green and bounced out of bounds. **Couples** dropped a another ball, hit a 247-yard 3-wood shot 3 feet from the cup and made the putt for a par.

At the 17th, his second shot was over the green in the rough and his third shot ended up in a bunker. He blasted out to 3 feet and sank the par putt.

“After that ball went out of bounds at 12, I didn't know what I might make on the hole,” **Couples** said. “To make a par, well, that was very nice.”

After his par at 17, **Couples** went to the 18th with a 2-shot lead. He closed the door on Whisman with a 7-iron approach to 10 feet and a finishing birdie.

“I think the 18th is the best hole on that nine,” **Couples** said.

Both Fitzsimons and amateur Randy Arvidson of the host club, who was third as the final 18 began, wound up back in the pack. Fitzsimons shot a 77, Arvidson an 81.

Mark Keating, an assistant pro at Emerald Valley in Creswell, had a bogey-free 68, the day's best round, and climbed into a tie for fourth at 216. Also there were PGA Tour pro Peter Jacobsen, former University of Oregon golfer Steve Rintoul and Bend Golf Club pro Jim Wilkinson.

Jacobsen had a 71 Sunday, Rintoul and Wilkinson both 72s.

Whisman, even-par when the round began, bolted into contention with a 4-under 32 on the front nine.

``I thought I had a chance to win when I went to the 10th tee," Whisman said. ``I thought, if I could get a couple of more under par, that just might do it."

Instead, Whisman had bunker problems at the 10th and 12th holes and made bogeys on both of them. He got back to 3-under when he reached the green in two at the 17th and two-putted for a birdie.

**Couples'** next tour tournament will be the Canadian Open, Sept. 13-16. Winner of the Los Angeles Open earlier this year, he stands sixth on the tour money list at \$682,499.

TOURNEY NOTES: Asked if he could think of a nine on the PGA Tour that reminds him of Heron Lakes' red nine, **Couples** said he couldn't. ``It's a Pete Dye type of nine," he said. ``It's OK but it's funny to play." . . . Ron Grant of Portland won both the first and second prizes in the tourney's \$1 million hole-in-one contest. The closest he came to an ace, though, was 12 feet, 1 inch from the cup. He earned trips for two both to Sapporo, Japan, and to a PGA Tour tournament.