

Todd **Erwin** won the same golf tournament on the same course with the same score, but one thing was different. It didn't feel the same.

**Erwin** was a repeat winner of the Ernst Washington **Open** yesterday, rolling in an 18-foot birdie putt on the first hole of a sudden-death playoff to defeat Scott Williams at Bellevue's **Glendale** Country Club.

The 31-year-old ((age)) Tacoman became only the fifth golfer to post consecutive **Open** victories, joining Emery Zimmerman (1940-41), Al Mengert (1963-65), Bob Duden (1969-70) and Jim Strickland (1990-91). History-making was tough. **Erwin's** second trip to the victory stand was a struggle.

``It was a lot more pressure," he said. ``Last year, I wanted to win. This year, I wanted to defend. Winning wasn't the focus, defending was."

Twelve months earlier, **Erwin** breezed to a two-stroke victory over Doug Hixson, leading the field from start to finish over the final round. This time, the assistant pro from Gig Harbor's Canterwood Golf and Country Club had to catch Williams, who did everything but win.

Williams, an instructor at Redmond's Redwood Golf Center and former Hogan Tour player, either led or shared the lead for most of the last two rounds. His best chance for victory came at the 18th hole, a 347-yard, par 4, but his 12-foot birdie putt curled to the right at the last instant. The misfire sent the golfer backpedaling in anguish, then to a stop with a loud moan.

``It was a slippery putt," he said. ``I thought I missed it left and it just dove back across the hole."

Williams and **Erwin** each shot a two-under-par 211 for the tournament, the winner matching his 1992 total. **Erwin**, who accepted another first-place check for \$11,250, began the day tied for fifth place, two strokes behind Williams, who earned \$7,125, and Tom Sovay.

**Erwin** tied Williams for the lead when he nearly holed his approach shot on the 14th, a 336-yard par 4, and tapped in a birdie putt from three inches. He shot a 2-under 69 for the final round.

Doug Gullickson, Canterwood's head pro, and Mike Gove, former PGA Tour player (1980-85) and Astoria Country Club head pro, also made things interesting down the stretch, each falling one stroke shy of earning a spot in the playoff. Each shot 212 and took home checks worth \$3,150.

Gullickson fell from a tie with **Erwin** and Williams with a bogey on the 17th hole, a 437-yard par 4. He had a 30-foot putt on the 18th to regain the tie, but missed right. He had serious thoughts of beating his buddy.

``Coming down the stretch, I really wanted to get with **Erwin**," he said. ``That would have been a blast. I remember last year, he was so (big-headed) the day after he won. I wanted that feeling."

Gove overshot the 18th green and his chance to tie, missing a 15-foot chip from the fringe. The Seattle native, a Nathan Hale High alum, shot a final-round 70, turning in a methodical 17-par, one-birdie effort.

The playoff was held on the 10th hole, a 499-yard par 5. **Erwin** put his tee shot in the fairway, while Williams found the right rough.

Each played his second shot conservatively, landing it in front of the green, then pitched on.

**Erwin** was first to putt and confidently knocked in the winner on a straight line. Williams had a 10-footer miss right.

