



PGA

Georgia Section

FORE Georgia

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St Marlo rates among Atlanta's best

Daily fee course has private setting, quality

By Mike Blum

Since it opened in the mid-1990s, St Marlo has been considered one of the premier daily fee courses in the metro Atlanta area by just about everyone who has played it.

Unfortunately for the club's owner, there are a lot of golfers in and around the metro area who either do not know that St Marlo exists, or think the course is private.

Although St Marlo is among the most public of daily fee courses in the Atlanta area, it's not hard to arrive at the conclusion that it is private in nature, beginning with the name.

Located within a gated community on the north Fulton/south Forsyth border and part of an expansive sub-division that includes some spectacular homes, St Marlo has all the trappings of a private club, including a 26,000 square foot clubhouse.

As far as the name, it's officially St Marlo Country Club, which gives the definite impression that it's private. For

most of its 16 years, however, St Marlo was strictly public, but began adding members after *Affiniti* Golf Partners assumed management of the club a few months ago.

St Marlo is now semi-private, but the sizeable majority of its play comes from non-members, with weekend tee times in ample supply.

Those who have yet to experience the outstanding Denis Griffiths design have missed out on one of the most scenic and interesting courses in the metro area, and one of the best of Griffiths' many top-notch layouts. St Marlo has consistently offered superb course conditions, with a nicely situated complex of tees that make the course playable for every level of golfer.

Among those who were uncertain of the club's status is Andreas Boberg, until recently the head professional at Horseshoe Bend Country Club and now the head pro at St Marlo.

Even though Boberg was working at a club not far from St Marlo, he said he was "surprised to find out that it was public. It's a gated community, so I thought it was private or semi-private."

[See St Marlo, page 6]



St Marlo's scenic par-3 11th hole

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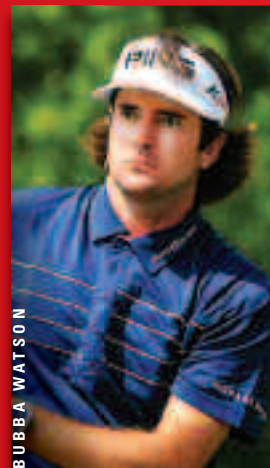
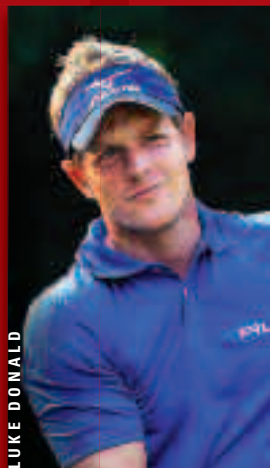
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3 different styles of putting

By Jeff Frasier
PGA Director of Instruction
Chicopee Woods Golf Academy

In many cases, we define our success by how well we have struck the golf ball throughout the course. However, statistics show that putting is the most frequent shot played during the round. If you putt well, you just might shoot lower scores!

The mechanics of the putting stroke are not difficult to execute. In fact, the putting stroke has been determined to be the simplest motion in golf. To produce this motion, there are various putting styles and types of putters to use.

The putting stroke should be a pendulum-like motion produced by the weight of the putter and length of the stroke. There are four main concepts that apply to any style of putting: aim, path, face angle and impact. Keep these in mind as you determine the best style to use.

Choosing the right style of putting for you should be based on comfort and the ability to repeat the putting motion.

The Short Putter

Many golfers are accustomed to this style of putting. Using a putter of standard length (33"-35"), one might feel this is the best way to putt. To make sure you benefit the most from the use of this putting style, select the proper length based on your set-up position.

The most important factor in using the short putter is consistency. Knowing you

can aim the putter correctly and produce a putting stroke without any variations during the stroke allows you to have success. The putting stroke travels in two distinct directions: back & forward. Controlling the stroke requires adequate movement and the ability to avoid small muscle control throughout the stroke.

The Belly Putter

This style of putting certainly gets more attention because it is very different. However, the benefits to using a belly putter make it simple and effective. The grip end of the putter is anchored into the belly area, therefore allowing a smooth, repeatable stroke. The belly putter can produce a more consistent motion



down and through the ball. It is less likely to produce variations in the stroke during its movement.

The Long Putter

A style of putting that offers a smooth and very consistent motion. There are two ways to actually stroke the putt while using this method. *The Piston Method*, which allows the shoulders and body to remain very quite, while the trailing arm moves the putter back and forward. *The Synchronized Method*, which allows the shoulders to rock up and down, moving the putter back and forward at the same time. Hold the putter in the top hand, gripping the club with a fist-like grip and positioning the thumb on top. Extend the bottom hand down to a

position comfortable to the set-up.

In your decision to select a putter, decide which method is most suitable to your game. Once you have decided, get comfortable with the putter and practice putts from various distances on the green. The most suitable putting method for you is the one providing a consistent downward motion through the ball at impact.

If you feel there is any change in the grip pressure during the stroke, take more time in evaluating which putting style and method is best. During a putting stroke, there should never be any change in grip pressure.

Good luck with your putting!

Jeff Frasier, the 2011 Georgia PGA North Chapter Professional of the Year, is the PGA Director of Instruction at Chicopee Woods Golf Academy. You can reach him at: 706-255-3421 (mobile); web site: www.frasiergolf.com.

Ga. PGA assumes operation of GJGF

The Georgia PGA has assumed operation of the Georgia Junior Golf Foundation, which it had shared with the Georgia State Golf Association, and will broaden its outreach as well as changing its name.

The Georgia PGA Foundation will expand its efforts to include women and minorities as part of the PGA's national approach to grow the game.

"We identified a need for the Section to have its own foundation," Georgia PGA Executive Director Mike Paull said. "Other Sections have done work through foundations."

Paull praised the work of Kathy Cousart, the GJGF's long-time Executive Director, but said "to take this to the next level, we needed one of the organizations in charge. We've got the GSGA's blessing. They've been great partners."

"We envision a lot more than it is right now. I think we're well positioned to make this a success. We're looking at the growth of the game for all."

A formal announcement was scheduled to be made during the 2011 PGA Championship.

FORE Georgia

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Par-3 16th hole

St Marlo ranks with Atlanta's best

[Continued from the cover]

Boberg has been a fixture in the north Fulton area for well over a decade, working at Atlanta Athletic Club and Country Club of the South before becoming the head pro at Horseshoe Bend, which has undergone a bankruptcy process and is now operating under new ownership.

St Marlo is not quite in north Fulton, with its exact location also something of an unknown quantity to many who don't live in close proximity to the course.

The entrance to the St. Marlo community is off McGinnis Ferry Road, which serves as the dividing line between Fulton and Forsyth. Because St Marlo is on the north side of McGinnis Ferry, it is part of Forsyth County.

With St. Ives Country Club and the Standard Club just a few miles away, St Marlo is more associated with north Fulton, but sports neither a Fulton nor Forsyth address. For some reason, St Marlo has a Duluth address, which adds to the questions about the facility.

One thing there are no questions about is the quality of the golf course. Any list of the top five daily fee courses in metro Atlanta that does not include St Marlo is suspect, with the layout offering plenty of challenge despite an overall absence of serious length.

St Marlo measures a modest 6,823 yards from the gold tees, with the blues 6,405 and the white tees 5,933. Most of the holes feature an extra set of tees that can make the distance a little shorter from either the blues or whites, which can be very helpful on the handful of extremely stout par 4s, which may make it advisable for the "bogey" golfer to tee it up from the whites.



Even with the friendly yardage numbers, St Marlo's Course Rating/Slope is on the high side. The course is rated at 73.7/140 from the golds, 71.9/135 from the blues and 69.1/128 from the whites. The red tees are listed at 4,969 and rated at 70.2/121.

St Marlo is a challenging layout from tee to green, with hazards in play on 11 holes and enough relatively tight driving holes to place a premium on accuracy. The home sites are sufficiently removed from the playing corridors on all but a few holes, with OB stakes within reach if you stray a little too far off the line.

With several of the holes playing from elevated tees, the course can play even shorter than the yardage, but the holes that are either level or slightly uphill play all of their listed yardage.

There are some very impressive houses within view from the course, but the visuals of many of the holes are equally striking, with the appealing group of par 3s among the most scenic you'll come across.

With a mostly inviting group of par 5s and only one par 3 of much length, St Marlo's challenge comes primarily from its diverse group of par 4s. Only three of them are longer than 425 from tips and 400-plus from the blues, but those more than compensate for the shorter two-shotters.

The downhill second is the longest of three (469/451), with a generous landing area and an open second to a wide,

rolling green, unless the pin is cut back left behind some inset bunkers.

The slightly uphill 12th plays even longer at 452/437, with OB tight to the right and some rolling terrain that can create uneven lies on the approach, something you will likely encounter elsewhere along the way. Another wide green provides differing angles of approach depending on pin position, with a modest amount of putting surface behind a front right bunker.

The 15th has lost a little yardage over the years, but with water in play all the way down the right side, it isn't far behind the other two in terms of difficulty. Trees on the left are also seriously in play for those steering away from the hazard. Unlike 2 and 12, the green at 15 is extremely deep with multiple levels, and monster putts are a real possibility with a back pin.

The 15th is one of several par 4s where water is a serious factor on the approach. A pond that hugs the first green short and right is a daunting hazard to those whose misses tend to drift right, with a rolling fairway adding to the challenge of what is a very strong opening hole at 417/396.

The sixth hole (375/356) requires a precise tee shot to avoid trouble on either side of the fairway, with the second shot over a pond to an angled green also protected by bunkers beyond the putting surface.

The downhill 14th (384/370) is one of the more picturesque holes on a course that offers an abundance of attractive views, particularly for a layout that was built within a large subdivision. Another angled green offers minimal depth, with anything short fated to find a watery grave. A mound right of the green provides a popular bailout area, but chips up a slope to a pin cut close to the water will induce plenty of weak efforts.

Holes 4 and 8 are a pair of solid dogleg left holes with position off the tee vital. The fourth has some length (423/398), but the second shot is downhill to a well guarded green with a tough to reach back left pin. Water down the left side on the eighth encourages tee shots down the open right side to set up the proper angle for the uphill approach, with trees on the left near the green a definite concern for shorter hitters who don't completely clear the dogleg.

St Marlo closes with a slightly uphill straightaway par 4 that plays longer than its yardage (397/369), with

bunkers in play down the right off the tee and bordering a sizeable green that is eminently three-puttable from long range.

All four par 3s feature greens guarded by water, but it takes a pronounced miss-hit to find a hazard at the short seventh or downhill 12th. Anything short or right will find trouble at the scenic but testy third, with the over-water 16th the only one of the four with significant length (211/181), and the rare hole at St Marlo where a hazard is left of the green.

The strongest of the otherwise inviting par 5s is the fifth, which has trouble off both sides of the fairway, an abundance of sand in the layup area and a narrow putting surface flanked by bunkers.

The other three par 5s are bunched together (9, 10 and 13) and all offer excellent scoring opportunities. The down-and-up 10th sports bunkers in play off the tee and around the green, with a rolling fairway feeding tee shots to the left, where trees and sand await. The rolling 13th has OB right and a steep hillside left, but at 508/478 is reachable in two by players not accustomed to putting for eagle. A relatively small target can be tough to find from long range, with the green cut out of a hillside with a slight dropoff to the right.

The most unique hole at St Marlo is the ninth, one of the shortest par 5s around (465/441) and one of the quirkiest. The downhill tee shot has to carry a creek that crosses the fairway, with the sharply uphill second having to negotiate a large boulder fronting a green that wraps around it. Those who can't carry the boulder have several options, including playing well up the right side and effectively taking it out of play, unless the pin is placed in a sliver of green front and left, in which case your touch with a wedge is put to the test.

The ninth is not the most popular hole in Atlanta, but it is one of the most entertaining, with the considerable but avoidable risk coming from something other than water.

Despite the difficult weather this Summer, St Marlo is in its typically first class condition, especially around the greens, with the bent grass putting surfaces showing some signs of stress but still putting nicely. ☺

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First-time major champions a popular trend

Long list of prominent players could join list

Steve Stricker

By Mike Blum

Based on results of the last three years, there are at least 12 players of note who will not win the 2011 PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club, scheduled for Aug. 11-14.

Padraig Harrington, Angel Cabrera, Lucas Glover, Stewart Cink, Y.E. Yang, Phil Mickelson, Graeme McDowell, Louis Oosthuizen, Martin Kaymer, Charl Schwartzel, Rory McIlroy, Darren Clarke.



of potential major champions has ballooned from two all the way to three in the wake of Novak Djokovic's toppling of Rafael Nadal in the finals at Wimbledon, golf's majors have one of the few lists of contenders greater in number than Republican Presidential candidates.

There has been much moaning and groaning within some precincts of the golf and sports media regarding the recent absence of Woods, the game's dominant player from the minute he turned pro in 1996 until the onset of his demise both personally and professionally in 2009.

Woods won 14 majors during that span, with Mickelson claiming four titles beginning in 2004

and a relative handful of others also multiple major winners. But apart than Harrington and Cabrera, the list of repeat major winners has pretty much dried up in recent years, with one first-time champion after another emerging.

Nine of the last 10 major champions were first-timers, with Mickelson the lone exception. Of those nine, the only one who was remotely considered among the favorites heading into his major triumph was Kaymer, and his top-tier status was likely limited to those connected to the European Tour.

McIlroy's U.S. Open runaway was not totally unexpected, but coming on the heels of his Sunday meltdown in Augusta, his first major came a bit sooner than anticipated.

The other trend currently in place along with that of first-time winners concerns the country of origin of the last six champions.

Since Mickelson took the 2010 Masters, players from Europe and South Africa have won the last six majors, including three from tiny Northern Ireland. Since Woods limped to victory in the 2008 U.S. Open, Americans are 3-for-13 in majors, with three of our elite young talents

(**Dustin Johnson, Nick Watney and Bubba Watson**) all whiffing on their first shots, the first two in somewhat ignominious fashion.

Judging by the past few years, one trend that has ended is the futility in the U.S. Open and PGA Championship by Europe's top players.

For all the accomplishments of players like **Seve Ballesteros, Nick Faldo, Bernhard Langer, Ian Woosnam, Sandy Lyle, Jose Maria Olazabal, Colin Montgomerie** and Clarke – all but Montgomerie major champions, their combined total of U.S. Open and PGA Championship titles is zero.

Harrington was the first European to win a PGA Championship since it switched formats from match play to stroke play in 1958. McDowell ended a 40-year winless streak by European golfers in the U.S. Open last year.

European golf is the rage at the moment, especially Northern Ireland. But the likelihood of that continuing rests on the shoulders of a 22-year-old and several more experienced world travelers who have thus far been shut out in the majors.

Clarke's victory at St. George's emphasizes the unpredictability of the sport, something that has been increasingly evident since the Woods era came to an apparent end at the 2009 PGA.

Considering the recent run of first-time major champions, there is a huge pool of elite players without a major title, beginning with seven of the top 10 players in the World Rankings after the British Open.

The list begins with the Nos. 1 and 2 players in the world – England's **Luke Donald** and **Lee Westwood**, with Westwood having all sorts of recent opportunities, notching five top-3 finishes in the last nine majors. Donald has been the best player in the game this year, but after a strong T4 showing in the Masters, flopped in both the U.S. and British Opens, and has contended just once in seven career starts in the PGA.

Donald shares the lead in top-10 finishes on the PGA Tour this season with former Georgia Tech standout **Matt Kuchar**, who notched his first career top 10s in majors last year, but has not been heard from in a Grand Slam event this season.

Watney is tied with Kuchar and Donald in the top-10 category, but has done



nothing in the majors since his Sunday meltdown at Whistling Straits last year, which came on the heels of 7th place finishes in both the Masters and British Open.

Johnson has played in the last group on Sunday in three of the last six majors, but has suffered through one awful round, one unfortunate rules snafu regarding an alleged bunker and one wayward shot that took him out of contention late on the back nine in the recent British Open.

Steve Stricker, the top U.S. player in the World Rankings, has won seven times over the past three seasons, but has rarely been seen on leader boards in majors, with just one top-10 finish in the PGA since 1998.

Hunter Mahan is one of seven Americans in the top 20, and has been a consistently excellent performer for five years, but has missed all three cuts in the majors this season, a puzzling showing for someone of his ability.

Given what had happened the last few years, it's just as likely the winner at the Athletic Club will not be among the higher ranked players in the field, Clarke's triumph in the British Open the most recent example.

All three players who have won on the Highlands course have been known primarily as quality ball-strikers, with that attribute also applying to the three major champions of 2011.

Mickelson is the last player who falls into the bomber category to win a major, and coming off a surprisingly strong showing in the British Open, is again at the top of the list of PGA Championship

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PGA Championship

Those are the last 12 players to win a major championship since Harrington went back-to-back in the British Open and PGA in 2008.

With **Tiger Woods** major-less since the '08 U.S. Open and Mickelson winning just one Grand Slam event since taking three titles in three years from 2004-06, men's professional golf has contracted a case of full-blown parity.

Unlike men's professional tennis, where the list



Matt Kuchar

He's back Tiger Woods is scheduled to play in the PGA Championship after making his return in the Firestone WGC event



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Stevens to make second PGA start at AAC

Atlanta club pro enjoys his time in spotlight

By Mike Blum

One of the most stressful playing situations a PGA club professional can find himself in is competing for a top 20 finish during the final round of the PGA Professional National Championship.

The top 20 in that event qualify for the PGA Championship, and that is at the top of the list of goals for every club professional who has the game to put himself in that position.

Coming down the stretch of the recent PGA PNC in Hershey, Pa., Atlanta area instructor **Craig Stevens** was among the group of players attempting to post a top 20 finish and earn an invitation to this month's PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club.

the final round when the Golf Channel began to focus on him.

After a pair of early birdies, Stevens was in contention for a top 10 finish, but three bogeys to close out the front nine put him close to the cut line for the top 20. Most of the players attempting to remain in the top 20 coming down the stretch were struggling on the Hershey CC layout, and Stevens seemed to be no exception, taking bogey on the par-3 13th to drop to 2-over for the day.

But while his fellow club professionals

indecision did not seem likely to result in a quality shot.

"The wind was howling right to left and everybody was hitting it left," Stevens said a few weeks after the PNC. "I could not afford a bogey but I was in between clubs. I hit a four-iron as hard as I could hit it, and I hit it so solid, the ball held up through the wind."

Stevens' shot found the putting surface and he was all smiles as he walked toward the green, with the cameraman right with him.

"Hey Atlanta," Stevens said into the camera. "I need a birdie."

Facing a downhill 18-footer, Stevens said he "really liked the putt," and watched intently as it "was just on the lip of the cup. It was a big relief when it went in."

The birdie pretty much locked up a spot in the PGA for Stevens, who made it with a shot to spare despite a bogey on the final hole.

Stevens finished with a 2-under 283 total for the event, tying for 16th. Four players at 284 played off for the final spot in the PGA Championship.

Having been in that situation before in the PNC, Stevens knew what to expect and embraced the moment.

"I've got a lot of attitude," Stevens says, something he usually keeps under wraps in competition. Of his seemingly carefree one-way conversation with the Golf Channel

camera, he says, "that's my personality. It relieves some of the pressure from my mind.

"I want to make the best of it and not overdo it. And as long as the cameras are with you, you know you're probably within the number."

In the weeks leading up to the PGA Championship, the Golf Channel visited Stevens at Steel Canyon in Sandy Springs, the executive course where he gives lessons.



were having problems on the greens, Stevens rolled in a nice birdie putt on the par-5 14th to give himself a little breathing room. Another bogey followed on the long par-4 15th, when his second shot was right on line but came up a bit short and rolled back off the green and down a slope, ending up some 30 yards short.

A Golf Channel camera was all over Stevens as he was making his club selection on the tough par-3 16th, and his

"I've already gotten a lot of calls," he said during the recent Georgia PGA Championship at Berkeley Hills, about a month before PGA Championship week.

When he played in the PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club a decade ago, Stevens says he "was not really prepared. I was pretty naïve about the situation and there were a few things I didn't do that I would have done if I had known. I'll try to do those things this time."

Stevens was one of two Georgia PGA members to play at the Athletic Club in 2001, with **Stephen Keppler** drawing his share of the attention thanks to his week on the national stage when he almost won the PGA Tour BellSouth Classic at Atlanta Country Club in 1995.

This year, Stevens has the local club professional spotlight to himself. He hopes to both enjoy things prior to the tournament and to turn in a respectable showing once he tees it up along with 19 other club professionals and 136 of the best players in the game.

Stevens admits that it's a slight advantage for him to be playing in his hometown on a course with which he is familiar. But at the same time, he points out that taking on the Athletic Club's lengthened and more demanding layout "is a challenge for me. I'll be hitting a lot of hybrids and long iron shots that week because of the length."

When he played in the PGA Championship a decade ago, Stevens carded scores of 73-76—149. He played well the first day, hitting 14 greens in regulation, but needed 34 putts, with his lone birdie coming on the 9th hole, his last of the day.

Two early double bogeys in the final round ended any hopes he had of making the cut, but he still managed to produce a few highlights, holing a monster putt for eagle on the par-5 12th and scoring a birdie on the treacherous par-3 15th. He was in line for another 73, but played the next two holes in 3-over.

"To compete in that kind of environment, that was pretty good," Stevens said of his effort a decade ago.

This time, Stevens comes into the PGA Championship "as confident as I've ever been. I'll take that with me. I'll just try not to put too much pressure on myself and hope that maybe some putts will fall.

"We all have the dream of playing in a major championship and playing good. I'll have to play as good as I've ever played to make the cut."



GEORGIA PGA Pro-file

Stevens was one of nine Georgia club professionals competing in the PNC, three of whom made the cut. Stevens was the lone member of that trio in contention for a top-20, and as he neared the finish at Hershey CC, he became a focus of the Golf Channel broadcast of the final round.

During his 25-plus years in the Georgia PGA, Stevens has been a frequent participant in the PNC. He was making his 15th start in the club professional championship, missing the event just once since 1998. Stevens had twice previously qualified for the PGA Championship, highlighted by his first ever appearance in one of golf's four major championships at Atlanta Athletic Club in 2001.

Stevens began the final round of the recent PNC just inside the top 20, and was still in that position midway through

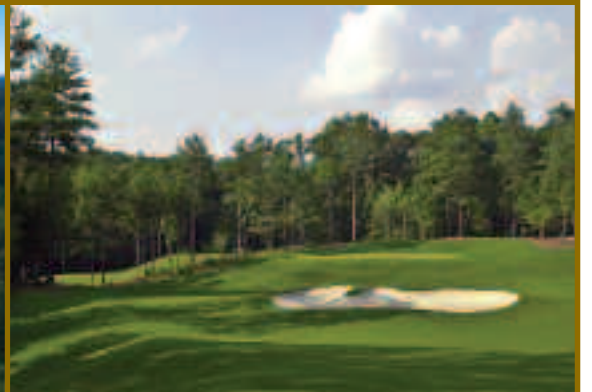
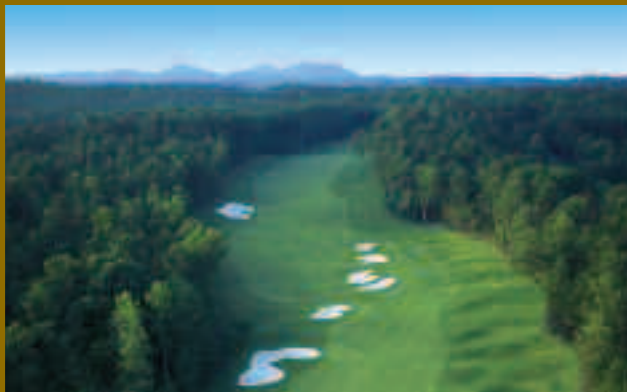
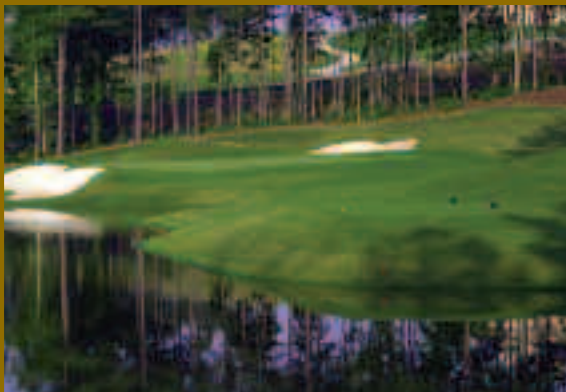
"We all have the dream of playing in a major championship and playing good. I'll have to play as good as I've ever played to make the cut."

[See Stevens, page 13]

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Kirk scores first PGA Tour victory in style

Rookie plays like veteran with clutch finish

By Mike Blum

Watching **Chris Kirk** play on the PGA Tour, you have a hard time imagining that he's just 26 years old and in his rookie season.

Kirk first distinguished himself this year in Houston, tying for second behind **Phil Mickelson**, who shot 63-65 on the weekend to win by three over Kirk, who fired a 67 the final day.

Three months later, Kirk was back on the leader board, tying for 8th in the AT&T National at Aronimink in Philadelphia.

It only took two weeks for Kirk to make another run at victory, and this time there was no Mickelson to shoot 16-under on the weekend to overtake him.

Kirk, who grew up in Woodstock, was the college Player of the Year during a standout career at Georgia and now lives on St. Simons Island. He joined the list of PGA Tour winners last month, capturing the Viking Classic in Madison, Miss.

The victory provided several perks for the former Bulldog, among them berths in this month's PGA Championship and next year's season-opening Tournament of Champions in Hawaii. Kirk is also exempt on the PGA Tour through 2013,

and is well positioned for a run at the Tour Championship at East Lake, as well as a spot in the 2012 Masters.

Thanks to his victory, Kirk moved up to 27th in both the FedExCup standings and the PGA Tour money list. The top 30 on the points list after the third FedExCup Playoffs event qualify for the Tour Championship, with the top 30 on the money list at the end of the 2011 season earning an invitation to next year's Masters.

"This is something I've wanted for a long time," Kirk said less than a week after his victory, taking a little time off to move from a condo on St. Simons into a home on the island. "I've realized one of my goals in golf. It's fantastic."

Kirk was somewhat blasé in his immediate response to his victory, celebrating in **Lucas Glover**/U.S. Open fashion. In his amusing commercial in which he replicates his stoic reaction to his win at Bethpage Black, Glover matter-of-factly tells a young fan "Hey, it was just a three-footer, pal."

In Kirk's case, it was a three-incher, a mere tap-in.

"If I made a 20-footer to win, it would have been a much different reaction," he said, but admits to being less emotional on the course than most, with no

Mickelson mini-leap or **Rich Beem** boogie in the cards for the reserved ex-Bulldog.

The first benefit from his victory, other than a healthy paycheck of \$648,000, was an invitation to the PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club. Kirk was close to earning a spot through a money list from last year's PGA to the 2011 event, and needed one more strong showing in one of his last two starts before the cutoff date.

He got it. And then some.

"It's great being in the PGA," Kirk said. "I had just about made it off the money list and it looked like I was going to get in."

"This is very exciting. I grew up in Atlanta and I'll have a lot of friends and family there for my first time in the PGA."

While Kirk will be making his first start in the PGA Championship, it will not be his first major. He qualified for the U.S. Open in both 2007 and '08, making the cut in his first appearance.

It also won't be Kirk's first time in a national championship at Atlanta Athletic Club. Kirk was only 16 when the PGA Championship was last played on the club's Highlands course, but Atlanta AC hosted the U.S. Junior Championship the next year, with Kirk qualifying for the event and reaching match play before losing in the second round.

"I've got just a little bit of familiarity with the golf course," he said. "At least I know I've seen the golf holes some before."

Kirk earned his spot in the PGA field with a superb showing for four days in Mississippi. He put himself in contention with back-to-back scores of 67 before taking the lead with a third round 64.

"I played great Saturday," Kirk said. "It was one of the better rounds I've ever played. Sunday I didn't quite have my best stuff."

Kirk struggled a bit at the start, hitting a few loose iron shots early in the final round.

"But I saved par and that kept the momentum going. I could have bogeyed the first two."

Kirk quickly ironed out whatever problems he had on the first two holes and

recorded six birdies the rest of the way for a final round 68 and a 22-under 266 total. He was challenged by a host of contenders, but every time someone would pull even or inch past him, he responded with some splendid shotmaking.

A pair of birdies from inside five feet on holes 10 and 11 put Kirk back in front, but a bogey at the 14th opened the door for his pursuers. Kirk responded with a series of deadly accurate short irons down the stretch, lofting approach shots over water to 7 feet at 15 and 4 feet at 17 for a pair of birdies that put him in front for good.

Thanks to the two birdies, he was able to play the risk/reward par-5 18th conservatively and stuck his third shot within 8 feet for an easy two-putt par and his first PGA Tour victory.

Kirk said he was aided by his experience going against Mickelson in Houston, as well as his two wins on the Nationwide Tour last year. Kirk closed those wins with scores of 64 and 67 and has consistently produced quality efforts in the final round when in contention over the last two years.

In Philadelphia two weeks earlier, Kirk did not finish as strong as he would have liked, but more than compensated with his back nine in Mississippi, which included four clutch birdies on the final nine.

After finishing second on the Nationwide Tour money list last year, Kirk began the 2011 season as one of the rookies to watch on the PGA Tour.

Kirk said his aim was "to try to establish myself and prove to others and myself that I belonged out there. Keeping my card was a big goal, and I wanted to be competitive and get in contention as many times as possible."

Before a hand injury late in the 2010 season cost Kirk a chance to top the Nationwide Tour money list, he turned in a strong showing in the PGA Tour McGladrey Classic at Sea Island Golf Club, tying for 15th with four rounds in the 60s.

In just his second start as a PGA Tour member, Kirk made a serious run at victory in the Bob Hope Classic, tying for 7th with a strong finish after encountering some problems early in the final round.

With four top 10s and a near-miss in the Colonial, Kirk has already earned \$1.73 million and thrust himself into contention for Rookie of the Year honors. Kirk believes Masters champion **Charl Schwartzel** is the likely winner of that honor, but after eight seasons on the

STAN BADZ, GETTY IMAGES



Chris Kirk

"This is something I've wanted for a long time... I've realized one of my goals in golf. It's fantastic."

European Tour and more than 20 career starts on the PGA Tour, there are questions whether Schwartzel fits the definition of rookie.

Kirk quietly went about building a successful resume before joining the PGA Tour, beginning with his years in junior golf, where he was mostly unheralded compared to some of his contemporaries in the state. He blossomed as a sophomore at Georgia and went on to one of the finest careers ever for a Bulldog, helping lead the team to a national title in 2005.

It took Kirk a while to make his mark as a pro, struggling through a nondescript sophomore season on the Nationwide Tour in 2009 after a respectable rookie showing in '08 that almost included his first victory.

But Kirk turned in a solid performance in the finals of Q school in '09, just missing his PGA Tour card but earning him exempt status on the Nationwide Tour. In his first fully exempt season he won twice, was a runner-up twice and displayed the talent and consistency that has stamped him as someone to watch on the PGA Tour for the foreseeable future. 🍷

Stevens

[Continued from page 10]

Stevens, who turned 50 earlier this year, has played some of the best golf of his life in the past year, much as fellow Georgia PGA member **James Mason** did as he was turning 50 a decade ago.

Stevens closed out 2010 by winning both the Georgia PGA Championship and the Section's qualifier for this year's PNC. He also played well enough in the finals of Champions Tour Q-school to earn qualifier status on the tour, but has yet to capitalize on any of his handful of efforts to play his way into an event this season.

PGA Championship

[Continued from page 8]

favorites after nondescript efforts in the Masters and U.S. Open.

Atlanta has been a favorite stop for Mickelson since he was a teen-ager. He won the Rolex Tournament of Champions three straight years from 1986-88 at Roswell's Horseshoe Bend CC when the club was the site of the American Junior Golf Association.

In his second Georgia PGA start this year, Stevens broke away from the field to win the Georgia Senior Open by eight strokes, and followed several weeks later with a victory in the Atlanta Open, one of the four Georgia PGA majors. A first round 63 at The Frog put Stevens in front, and after a 4-putt double bogey to start his second round, he recovered to shoot 68 for a 13-under 131 total and a one-stroke triumph.

Stevens scored the first of his 13 Georgia PGA titles in the 1985 Match Play Championship, but did not emerge as one of the elite players in the Section until 1998, when he won a pair of Georgia PGA events. He was the Section's

Player of the Year in both 1999 and 2001, winning three times in '01 including the same Section Championship/PNC double he achieved last year.

But after a victory in the Griffin Classic in 2004, Stevens went six years without a win before the imminence of his 50th birthday sparked a re-invigoration of both his game and outlook on it.

Stevens is looking to get another shot at the Champions Tour in 2012, but has plenty of significant events on his schedule before then, including his first opportunity to qualify for the Senior PNC later this year, an event he should have a serious opportunity to win. 🍷

As a pro, Mickelson has won three times at TPC Sugarloaf in the defunct BellSouth Classic and twice at East Lake in the Tour Championship, in addition to his three victories in the Masters. He shot the second lowest score ever in a major in the 2001 PGA at Atlanta Athletic Club, but it wasn't enough to give him what would have been his first major title.

There will be a strong Georgia contingent in the field, including 1981 PGA champion **Larry Nelson** of Marietta,

who is being honored during PGA Championship week with the organization's Distinguished Service Award, the PGA's highest honor.

Other major champions among the Georgians in the field are '97 PGA champion **Davis Love**, 2007 Masters champion **Zach Johnson** and '09 British Open champ **Stewart Cink**. All three have turned in a string of solid efforts recently, with Love coming off ties for 11th and 9th in the U.S. Open and British Open. 🍷

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Big name players may miss out on Playoffs

Els, Harrington, Casey, Oosthuizen top list

By Mike Blum

The 2011 major championships have belonged to players born outside the United States, but there are a number of prominent international players who have not exactly excelled on the PGA Tour this year.

The top 30 finishers in the 2011 FedExCup standings will qualify for the Tour Championship at East Lake next month. With only a handful of FedExCup events remaining in the regular season, several of golf's most successful international players were outside the top 125 on the points list, which would keep them out of the three Playoffs events leading up to the Tour Championship.



Ernie Els



Padraig Harrington

As was demonstrated last year, players near the bottom of the top 125 don't need to win a Playoffs event to make a big move in the standings. **Martin Laird** and **Kevin Streelman** began

the Playoffs ranked 95 and 102 respectively, but thanks to top-3 finishes in the Barclays, both made it to East Lake for the Tour Championship.

Laird, Streelman and **Charley Hoffman**, who won the Deutsche Bank Championship the following week, were the only three players who began the Playoffs lower than 41st on the points list to make it to East Lake. Five other players just outside the top 30 at the end of the regular season also qualified for the Tour Championship, with 22 players who were among the top 30 heading into the Playoffs retaining their spots.

Anthony Kim, 14th at the end of the regular season, was the highest ranked player who failed to qualify for the Tour Championship, missing the cut in the first two Playoffs events and barely cracking the top 50 in the third.

The way the points system has been set up, players are rewarded for either finishing close to the top of the standings in the regular season or posting a high finish or two in the three Playoffs events. The

significant leaps in the standings last year by Laird and Streelman produced some discussion regarding the Playoffs points distribution, but as in team sports, performing well in the post-season trumps an otherwise lackluster showing during the regular season.

The FedExCup Playoffs begin Aug. 25 with The Barclays, which will be played this year at Plainfield CC, the fourth straight time the event has been held in New Jersey. The course is a classic Donald Ross design that has hosted a U.S. Amateur and U.S. Women's Open, but like most courses of that era, is relatively short by modern standards (7,125 yards), with several short par 4s and at least two par 5s that will easily be reachable in two.

Matt Kuchar won last year at Ridgewood CC, the second straight Georgia resident to win the Playoffs opener. The Barclays will feature a 125-player field, with the top 100 in the points standings after the tournament qualifying for the second of three Playoffs events.

The Playoffs return to the Boston TPC for a ninth straight year, with the last four Deutsche Bank Championships part of the FedExCup Playoffs. **Phil Mickelson**, **Vijay Singh** and Stricker were the first three Playoffs winners of the event, with **Charley Hoffman** shooting a final round 62 last year to win by five strokes with a 26-under 262 total.

This year's Deutsche Bank Championship will again be played Labor Day weekend with a Monday finish. The

top 70 in the standings after the tournament advance to the final Playoffs event.

After the Deutsche Bank Championship, the Playoffs take a week off before the BMW Championship, which will be played Sept. 15-18 at Cog Hill in Chicago. Cog Hill was the host course for the Western Open from 1991-2006, and will be site of a Playoffs event for the fourth time in five years.

Woods, who won the Western Open at Cog Hill three times, won two of the first three BMW Championships at the course, with **Dustin Johnson** edging out **Paul Casey** last year.

With a 70-player field, the tournament is the only one of the three Playoffs events which does not have a cut. The top 30 in the FedExCup standings move on to East Lake, with the points for each player re-set to a predetermined number, ensuring that no player will have the title wrapped up before the Tour Championship is played, as was the case with Singh in 2008.

The Tour Championship is scheduled for Sept. 22-25, with this year's event the 11th played at East Lake, which has hosted the tournament on a permanent basis since 2004.

With no one having won more than two tournaments on the PGA Tour this year and two of the three major championship winners non-PGA Tour members, the leaders in the FedExCup standings are closely bunched, leaving plenty of players within range of the No. 1 spot heading to the Playoffs.

Two-time winners **Nick Watney** and Stricker were 1-2 in the standings with just a handful of events left on the regular season schedule. **K.J. Choi**, Mickelson and **Luke Donald** were in place to take over the top spot with a win before the final FedExCup event in Greensboro the week after the PGA Championship.

Kuchar was leading last year's standings coming into the Tour Championship before being edged out by East Lake winner **Jim Furyk**. The former Georgia Tech standout is back in the top 10 again and was the highest ranked player among the non-winners in 2011, just ahead of **Webb Simpson**.

Only four of the top 20 in the rankings as of late July were winless this year, with Masters and U.S. Open runner-up **Jason Day** and frequent contender Johnson both inside the top 15.

Six Georgians were among the top 30 on the points list with four weeks left in

FedExCup PLAYOFFS

Three-time major champion **Padraig Harrington** and 2010 Players champion **Tim Clark** dropped out of the top 125 with only three weeks left in the regular season, joining a list that includes **Ernie Els**, **Angel Cabrera**, **Louis Oosthuizen**, **Paul Casey** and **Henrik Stenson**.

Players of note outside the top 125 at that stage included Americans **Ben Curtis**, **Justin Leonard**, **Jason Bohn**, **Boo Weekley** and **David Duval**, as well as **Tiger Woods**, who along with Clark has been sidelined by injury for most of the year.

Among those sitting close to the bubble was Alpharetta's **Heath Slocum**, who serves as the best example of the importance of qualifying for the FedExCup Playoffs, even if you just sneak into the top 125.

Two years ago, Slocum finished the regular season 124th on the points list, then went out and won the first Playoffs event in New Jersey, edging the star-studded quartet of Woods, Els, Harrington and **Steve Stricker** by one shot each.

Tiger's playoff push Tiger Woods needed a strong showing in the WGC event at Firestone or in the PGA Championship to qualify for the playoffs

[See FedExCup, page 19]

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McLuen marches to Georgia Open title

Wins by 7 after earlier close calls

By Mike Blum

In both the 2006 and 2007 Georgia Opens, **Jay McLuen** held the lead on the back nine in the final round but was unable to close the deal.

McLuen again came to the back nine with a lead in the fourth round of the recent Ziplocal Georgia Open, but this time there was little chance of a repeat of his two previous failed opportunities.

When McLuen headed to the 10th tee at Barnsley Gardens Resort in Adairsville, the tournament host for the third time in four years, he was seven shots ahead of the field and showing no signs of fallibility.

Playing impeccable fairways-and-greens golf with his sizeable lead, McLuen never wavered and wound up with a seven-stroke margin of victory and the winner's check of \$8,000.

McLuen, a successful mini-tour player who played a limited Nationwide Tour schedule last year, finished with a 15-under 273 total capped by a final round 68, the second lowest score of the day.

"In 2006, I lost in a playoff," McLuen recollected. "In 2007 I had the lead with a few holes to play. In 2008 I was third. I've been trying to win this tournament for a while. To finally win it is a great feeling."

After an opening 69 highlighted by four consecutive birdies from holes 9 to 12, three of them par 5s, McLuen, was within two shots of first day leader **Don Wright**. McLuen grabbed the 36-hole lead with a 66, recording eight birdies to give him 14 over the first two days. His 66 was the low round of the day and matched the low round for the tournament.



Jay McLuen

McLuen's 9-under 135 total was one better than Wright going to the weekend, and he stretched his lead to four after 54 holes, turning in a solid 69 in the third round while Wright fell off the pace.

Recent UGA golfer **Rob Bennett** was second going to the final round, with **Matt Hughes** and **Jordan Mitchell** firing a pair of 66s to tie for 3rd, five off McLuen's lead.

Bennett started the final round with a birdie to close within three of the lead, but McLuen reached the par-5 fourth in two to match Bennett's up-and-down birdie, and followed with birdies at 5 and 6. He hit his second shot stiff at the short par-4 5th and holed a putt in the 12-foot range for a third straight birdie at the 6th.

With a seven-shot lead at the turn, McLuen played the par-5 10th conservatively, but still made birdie. He followed it with eight stress-free pars, just missing the 18th green with his approach shot to deny him a perfect 18-for-18 performance in greens in regulation.

McLuen began to feel safe after the birdie at the 10th.

"I knew it would take something spectacular to beat me," he said, with the quality of his play unlikely to result in his backing up to his distant challengers.

"I did not miss a tee shot and there were only two iron shots I missed all day," he observed, with one of those coming

on his second shot to the par-5 12th, where he nearly made birdie.

"I was hitting everything where I was looking. That was the plan. I did not want to give anybody a chance."

McLuen, who grew up in Danielsville near Athens and now lives just outside Macon in Forsyth, was playing a competitive round for the seventh straight day. He played the three days prior to the tournament in a Peach State Tour event in north Georgia, tying for 6th, and said playing competitively for seven straight days is "mentally a grind. It wears on you."

Along with his near-misses in previous Georgia Opens, McLuen was also thinking about a recent Peach State event in which he had a three-shot lead, but wound up losing in a playoff. He says he took notice of **Rory McIlroy's** comment after his collapse in the Masters that "he wasn't going to let that define him," and was determined not to allow a repeat of his recent failure to hold a late lead.

Tying for 2nd at 280 were Bennett and Lilburn's **Ted Moon**, who earned low amateur honors.

Bennett, an Augusta native who turned pro after recently graduating from Georgia, made several comebacks during the tournament, beginning the first day when he bogeyed three of his first four holes but rallied to shoot 70. A double bogey at the par-5 ninth in the final round knocked him out of solo 2nd, but he came back with three birdies on the back nine.

Moon, who will be a freshman on the Belmont golf team this Fall, shot three consecutive 69s after an opening 73. He had 2nd place to himself before bogeys at 17 and 18 the final day, the only bogeys on his scorecard.

Finishing as low amateur was Moon's goal coming into then tournament, and he achieved that aim, finishing three shots ahead of **Hunter Cornelius** of Ringgold.

"I wasn't thinking about winning the tournament, but I got close." Moon said. "I had a chance."

After birdies at 9, 10 and 12 Moon was 5-under for the day and five behind McLuen in 2nd, but that was as close as he got.

Moon said he holed "a lot of putts" during the tournament, notching 18 birdies and an eagle. It was his best showing since finishing 2nd in an American Junior Golf Association tournament last year just outside Nashville. He will attend college in Nashville at Belmont, a small Division 1 school.

Hughes tied for 4th at 281 with Savannah's **Tommy Schaff**, a fellow mini-tour player. Like McLuen, Hughes played in the Peach State event earlier in the week at Nob North, also tying for 6th after leading the tournament following an opening 63.

The Dalton resident and former U. of Alabama golfer rebounded from an opening 76 that included three double bogeys, shooting 68-66 the two middle rounds. Hughes had 25 birdies on the week, 11 in the third round when he went 13 holes before making a par. Two bogeys on his final three holes on Sunday cost him a chance at outright 2nd.

With McLuen and Moon easily winning low pro and low amateur honors, the only suspense other than who was going to finish second was the battle for low Georgia PGA club professional, which wound up being a 4-player duel.

Stephen Keppler, **Clark Spratlin** and **Bill Murchison** wound up sharing that distinction, tying for 6th at 282.

Keppler, the Director of Golf at Marietta CC and the 1994 and '95 Georgia Open champion, birdied three straight holes on the front nine to get to 8-under, but followed with bogeys on the next two holes and a costly triple bogey at the 10th, a hole he eagled the day before. But he went 3-under over the final eight holes for a 71 and his share of 6th place.

Spratlin, an instructor at Georgia Golf Center in Roswell, was one of the most consistent performers during the week, with the exception of one hole. He took a

[See Georgia Open, page 19]

"I was hitting everything where I was looking. That was the plan. I did not want to give anybody a chance." —Jay McLuen

Ted Moon



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Only the best have won Section Championship

Georgia PGA's top players shoot for major title

By Mike Blum

Examine the list of winners in golf's four major championships, and you'll come across at least a few names that don't really fit along side those of Nicklaus, Palmer, Player, Watson, Trevino, Faldo, Mickelson and Woods.

That pretty much applies to almost any professional tournament at the various levels at which the sport is conducted, almost being the operative word.

The Georgia PGA will hold its annual Section Championship this month, with the 2011 event marking its 50th anniversary. Sea Island GC will again host the E-Z-GO Georgia PGA Championship Aug. 29-31 on the famed Seaside course, which also hosts the PGA Tour McGladrey Classic.



Steven Keppler



Tim Weinhart

Athletic Club Director of Instruction **Chan Reeves** won back-to-back titles in 2002 and '03.

Beginning with Reeves' second victory, the tournament has had eight different winners the last eight years, with Reeves and 2010 champion **Craig Stevens** the only players to win the event for a second time during that span.

Since Reeves won in '03, the Georgia PGA Championship winners have been **Jeff Hull, Tim Weinhart, Greg Lee, Matt Peterson, Clark Spratlin, Sonny Skinner** and Stevens, the seven most successful Georgia PGA tournament competitors during that span.

Those players will be shooting for a second or third Section Championship title, with Keppler hoping to end a drought of 14 years and win the event for a fourth time after repeated close calls since his third win in 1996.

The tournament returns to Seaside for the first time since 2008, with the Retreat course serving as host the last two years and four of the last seven. Spratlin and Weinhart won the last two times Seaside was the site, with Reeves going back-to-back in 2003 and '04 before the course was renovated.

Stevens is the defending champion, winning last year on Retreat. He won the Section Championship at Seaside in 2001, edging out Reeves by one stroke the year before Reeves scored the first of his consecutive wins. Reeves turned the tables on Stevens the next year, one of three runner-up finishes in the event for Stevens, an instructor at Steel Canyon in Sandy Springs.

Since 2002, Stevens has four other finishes of 4th or better in the tournament, and will be playing in this month's event just a few weeks after competing in the PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club. Stevens won the Atlanta Open earlier this year, as well as capturing the Georgia Senior Open title in his first year of senior eligibility.

Weinhart finished 2nd, 4th and 3rd in the three years prior to his victory at Seaside in '05, but last year was the first time since then that he has seriously contended. He lost in a playoff to Reeves in 2002 and was two back of Hull in '04 before winning in impressive fashion the next year by a 7-stroke margin.

So far this year, Weinhart has 2nd and 3rd place finishes in Section events, and is in contention for a seventh Player of the Year title. Weinhart is an instructor with the Nuclear Golf program that is based at the Standard Club.

Skinner won the rain-shortened Section Championship at Retreat in '08, edging Stevens by one stroke. He was 3rd at Retreat in '06, his first start in the event after playing on the PGA and Nationwide Tours since the early 1990s. Skinner, who teaches at River Pointe in Albany, has been one of the most consistent players in Section events over the past five years, turning in a string of top finishes, including a pair of runner-up showings in the PGA Professional National Championship. He comes into the Section Championship off a recent appearance in the U.S. Senior Open.

Spratlin was 3rd in the Section Championship in 1997 and 2000, but did not come close to victory again before winning by three strokes over Keppler in '08 with a 6-under 204 total. He was 5th

at Retreat last year. Spratlin, an instructor at Georgia Golf Center, won the Georgia PGA's season opener this year at Chicopee Woods, and was a close 3rd in the Atlanta Open.

Peterson won on the Plantation course in 2007, the only time the event was played on Seaside's neighboring layout. He made a strong run at victory the next year at Seaside, placing 3rd. Peterson, the head professional at the UGA course in Athens, spent most of his career in golf playing on the Nationwide Tour for over a decade. Along with Weinhart, he has won all four of the Georgia PGA's majors, taking the Georgia Open in the early 1990s as a young mini-tour player.

Lee captured his Section Championship title at Retreat in '06, finishing one shot ahead of Keppler. He came up one shot short of a playoff in '04, but has been in the top 10 just once since his victory, tying for 6th in the 36-hole tournament in '09. Lee, an assistant at Chicopee Woods, has won three of the Section's four majors, with his last victory coming in the Match Play Championship in 2007.

Hull finished one shot ahead of Lee in 2004, one of six times he's finished 6th or better in the championship. He was second by a stroke behind long-time Sea Island GC instructor **Mike Cook** in 1998 and was four in back of Stevens in a tie for 3rd last year. Hull, an instructor at the UGA course, is one of just two Georgia PGA members to win the Georgia Open since the mid-1990s, and nearly added the recent Championship at Berkeley Hills to his list of victories, losing on the seventh playoff hole.

It's been 14 years since **Keppler** last won the Section Championship, but it hasn't been for lack of effort. Since his third win in '96, Keppler has finished 2nd four times, all in consecutive years from 2005-08, and has placed 3rd three times, including each of the last two years. Keppler, the Director of Golf at Marietta CC, has not finished lower than 3rd since '05, but has not been able to add to his total of 12 Section titles, seven of them majors, since his last win in 2004.

The two biggest threats to claim their first Section Championship are Towne Lake Hills assistant **Bill Murchison**, who won the recent Georgia PGA event at Berkeley Hills, and Country Club of the South Director of Instruction **Shawn Koch**, who has captured two majors among his three Section titles. Koch has finishes of 4th and 6th in the event since 2007. ☉



GEORGIA PGA Championship

Early winners include many of the most prominent club professionals in Georgia PGA history, including those of **Hugh Royer, Jr., DeWitt Weaver, Jr., Davis Love, Jr., Jim Ferree, Wayne Yates and Paul Moran.**

Beginning with the first of three titles by **Gregg Wolff** in 1985, the last quarter century's roster of Section champions has included just about every elite club professional in the state.

Like Wolff, a 7-time Georgia PGA Player of the Year, **Stephen Keppler** and **James Mason** both won three times, and between them matched Wolff's seven career Player of the Year titles.

While the Section's top players continue to capture the Georgia PGA Championship, the event has taken a slightly different turn since Atlanta

*Stevens to defend
Craig Stevens will
shoot for his third
Section Championship,
winning in 2001
and 2010.*

FedExCup

[Continued from page 14]

the regular season, beginning with ex-Georgia Bulldog **Bubba Watson**, one of the four multiple champions, at No. 6 and Kuchar at No. 8.

Augusta native **Charles Howell**, who recently recorded there consecutive top-5 finishes, has moved up to 24th, with three of Kuchar's fellow St. Simons Island residents also among the top 30.

Jonathan Byrd, who has a win and a playoff loss to former Clemson teammate **Lucas Glover**, was 17th, with rookie **Chris Kirk** jumping up to 27th after his victory last month in Mississippi. **Zach Johnson** was right on the number in 30th with a string of strong showings over the past few months.

Along with Kirk, the biggest mover in recent weeks is Warner Robins native and former Savannah assistant professional **Kris Blanks**, whose playoff loss in the Canadian Open vaulted him from 116th to 54th.

Seven more Georgians were between 65 and 90 in the rankings, starting with **Stewart Cink**, who has not played up to his usual standards and was just inside

the top 70. Fellow ex-Georgia Tech golfer **Cameron Tringale**, in just his second season on tour, has played consistently excellent golf since the Masters and was on the verge of passing Cink in the standings.

Former UGA golfer **Ryuji Imada** and ex-Tech player **Troy Matteson** were also right around 70th, with veteran **Davis Love** showing some strong recent form and moving into the top 80.

Blake Adams, a second-year PGA Tour player from Eatonton, and **Bryce Molder**, Kuchar's Georgia Tech teammate, were inside the top 90 and assured of a start in the Barclays. Augusta's **Vaughn Taylor**, who has struggled through the poorest of his eight seasons on tour, was just outside the top 100.

This season has also been the worst in Slocum's 10-year career, and at 123 he was in real danger of not getting a similar opportunity as in 2009, when he just made it into the field before winning the Barclays.

Like Taylor and Slocum, Acworth's **Jason Bohn** is suffering through a season he'd just as soon forget, and has almost no chance of making the playoffs. That also applies to **David Duval**, who has missed one cut after another after a fairly promising start to the 2011 season. 🍷

Georgia Open

[Continued from page 16]

9 on the par-5 fourth hole in the third round that led to a 74 after beginning the day in 3rd at 137, just two shots behind McLuen. Spratlin, who won the Georgia PGA event at Chicopee Woods earlier this year, went 16 holes without a bogey in the final round before making one on the tough par-3 17th.

Murchison, an assistant at Towne Lake Hills who won the Georgia PGA tournament at Berkeley Hills a few weeks before the Georgia Open, also bogeyed the 17th the final day. Murchison, who was leading among the club pros before making a double bogey at the 13th, shot 70 in the fourth round.

Tying for 10th overall and 4th among the club pros at 283 was 2004 Georgia Open champion **Tim Weinhart**, an instructor with Nuclear Golf, which is based at the Standard Club. Weinhart was moving up the leader board with three early birdies in the final round, but settled for a 71 after shooting a 73 the day before. Weinhart began the weekend tied for 5th after a second round 67, but was even par on the weekend.

The player who hung with McLuen the

longest was **Wright**, who opened with scores of 67 and 69. Wright, a Douglasville resident and mini-tour veteran, made just two bogeys over his first 36 holes but had five in a third round 75, and struggled early the final day before righting himself. A closing 71 gave him a tie for 6th at 282, his fifth top-10 finish in the Georgia Open since 2005 and his fourth in a row. It was Wright's best finish in the tournament since he tied for 5th at the Legends at Chateau Elan in '05.

Defending champion **Samuel Del Val** of Athens tied for 14th at 284, sandwiching a third round 77 between scores of 67 and 68. Recent Georgia Amateur champion **David Noll** of Dalton was T19 at 287 along with Steel Canyon instructor **Craig Stevens**, playing in his final event before the PGA Championship.

Former Atlanta Braves pitcher **John Smoltz** was T28 at 291, shooting 71-71 on the weekend to improve on his T29 finish last year at Savannah Harbor.

Also tying for 28th was UGA instructor **Jeff Hull**, the last Georgia PGA member to win the Georgia Open (2007 at Champions Retreat). Hull was recently named the assistant coach for the women's team at Georgia, replacing **Margaret Shirley**, who is returning to her alma mater Auburn as assistant coach. 🍷



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Carter survives playoff to win Women's Open

Agnew lets win slip away after clutch birdie at 18

By Mike Blum

For much of the final round of the recent Georgia Women's Open at SummerGrove Golf Club in Newnan, there was little in the way of movement among the tournament contenders.

Carmen Bandea erased a three-stroke deficit to first round co-leader **Dori Carter** in the span of two holes midway through the first nine. But the two combined for just one birdie over the final 12 holes, with Carter maintaining a slim lead after a Bandea bogey early on the back nine.

three-putting after missing par attempts from close range.

The two playoff participants returned to the 9th tee, and Agnew immediately put herself in trouble when her drive sailed into the thin tree line right of the fairway. She had an opening to the green, but her second shot flew the bunker left of the putting surface, with her ball winding up in an unplayable lie in thick underbrush.

Carter responded with a superb approach shot within 6 feet of the hole. With Agnew having to settle for a double bogey after returning to where she hit her errant second shot, a two-putt par was all Carter needed to take home the tournament title and first place check of \$1,500.

said Agnew, who was surprised when Carter also missed for par.

"It's her fault," Agnew said a bit ruefully after missing a short par putt she figured she would need to make to extend the playoff, not to win it.

While Carter had not made a putt of consequence the entire final round, Agnew made her share. She recorded 13 birdies over two days, six in the second round, when she shot a 69, the low score of the day.

"That's a lot of birdies," Agnew said of her two-day total. "I hit it pretty close and I putted well."

Agnew birdied three of the first five holes on the back nine to give herself a chance, and knew she needed one more as she was playing the 18th. She rolled in a putt in the 15-foot range to pull even with Carter, forcing Carter to make par to send the tournament to extra holes.

"I was happy with the round either way," Agnew said of her putt on 18. "I was just trying to play my best and I did."

Agnew, who lives in Jonesboro, played on the golf team at Florida State and made one of her first professional appearances in the Georgia Women's Open last year, tying for 4th. She has conditional status on the Futures Tour and has also played on the Canadian Women's Tour, making a handful of starts on both this year.

Carter, a Valdosta resident who played her college golf at Ole Miss, is a rookie on the LPGA Tour after playing well as a Futures Tour rookie in 2010. In her last Georgia Women's Open start she finished 5th in 2009.

An opening 68 gave Carter a share of the lead with **Lacey Fears** from Bonaire, a member of the women's golf team at Mercer. Carter made it through the first round without a bogey, but made three bogeys in a four-hole stretch on the front nine the next day.

Carter scored a pair of easy birdies at the par-5 second hole and short par-4 fifth, but hit some errant shots on holes 4, 6 and 7 and bogeyed all three, missing short par putts on the latter two.

Bandea, an Atlanta area resident who has played on both the Futures and Canadian Tours, hit it close for her third birdie of the day at the sixth, moving into a three-way tie with Carter and Fears after Carter's bogey at the seventh.

Fears dropped out of the lead when she hit her second shot into the creek guarding the green at the ninth and three-putted for

triple bogey. Bandea, who lost in a playoff in the tournament in 2007 and tied for 4th last year, three-putted the 12th to drop out of a tie with Carter, and could not manage a birdie over her last 12 holes, carding all pars other than the 12th.

Carter took the lead when she hit her second shot on the par-5 14th into the back fringe and chipped it close for her fourth birdie of the day, all from a few feet.

This is just Carter's second season as a tour player after graduating from Ole Miss, and she enjoyed an excellent rookie season on the Futures Tour, winning a tournament and placing 14th on the money list.

Carter earned a spot on the 2011 LPGA Tour by placing 12th in the finals of qualifying, but was able to play in just six of the first 13 tournaments of the year, making the cut twice.

"It's been a good year," Carter says of her early experience on the LPGA Tour, "It could be better."

The main problem is the same one impacting a large percentage of LPGA players – lack of playing opportunities. Carter played twice in March, then played just once over the next two months. After failing to qualify for the U.S. Women's Open, Carter is facing a two-month stretch of no starts on the tour.

"It's tough," she says of her limited schedule. "You'd like to play every week and get into a rhythm. Almost every week is like Q school. But I'm not the only one who has to deal with that."

Carter's brief stint on the LPGA Tour has already taken her to Arizona, Los Angeles, the Gulf Coast, the New Jersey shore, rural Illinois and upstate New York.

"It's been a lot of fun and I've met a lot of people. Your early tournaments are a learning experience and I feel like it's getting better. It's all about being comfortable."

Players who qualify through Q school are guaranteed only 10 starts the entire season, less than half the tournaments on the shrinking LPGA schedule, which plays half its events overseas.

"If you only get ten, you have to make those ten the best you can," Carter says. "You've got to look at the positives."

Carter was one of just a handful of the state's best known female players to compete in the Georgia Women's Open.

Fellow LPGA player **Jean Reynolds**, who lives in Newnan, has not played in the tournament in years even though her



Dori Carter



Lacey Agnew

"I hate that it ended like that."

—Georgia Women's Open champion Dori Carter

Lacey Agnew made a run at Carter with birdies on three of the first five holes on the back nine, briefly pulling even after a birdie at the par-5 14th just before Carter birdied the hole.

The contenders continued to match pars until Agnew reached the 18th hole, where the tournament finally got interesting.

Agnew birdied the long par-4 finishing hole at SummerGrove to force a playoff with Carter, with both finishing at 4-under 140 over 36 holes. Both had birdie looks on the tough par-4 9th, the first playoff hole, but both wound up

"I hate that it ended that way," Carter said about a victory it seemed like she had let slip away when she missed her par putt on the first playoff hole.

Both players cited nerves for their putting struggles on the first extra hole, with both hitting big drives and excellent approach shots before both took three putts from inside 20 feet.

"Nerves got to me," Agnew admitted. "I had never been in a playoff."

Carter was just inside Agnew on the green, but ran her birdie attempt past the hole, and was the first to putt for par.

"I expected her to make her first putt,"

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Murchison needs 7 holes to capture playoff

Wins at Berkeley Hills when Hull's putt lips out

By Mike Blum

The playoff that wouldn't end finally did. And not exactly in the manner that either the participants, tournament officials and dwindling number of onlookers would have preferred.

Towne Lake Hills assistant **Bill Murchison** came away with the victory in The Championship at Berkeley Hills, outlasting **Jeff Hull**, an instructor at the UGA course in Athens, in a playoff that took seven holes to determine the winner.

After matching pars for six holes, including the 18th three times and the parallel 9th twice, Hull missed a short par putt on the 18th to bring a somewhat unsatisfying end to an otherwise exciting final day of tournament competition.

Three players finished one shot out of

also been installed at Atlanta Athletic Club and Cherokee Town & CC, among others.

Murchison, who won for the first time in a Georgia PGA points event, held the first round lead with a 66 and came back with an up-and-down 70 the next day. Hull made a big move in the second round, carding seven birdies in a sizzling nine-hole stretch to take the lead midway through the round. Hull settled for a 67, playing the last eight holes in 1-over.

Tying for 3rd at 137 were **Tim Weinhart**, **David Potts** and **Kyle Owen**. Weinhart, an instructor with the Nuclear Golf program based at the Standard Club, had the lead late in the round before a pair of late bogeys left him with a 70 on the day. Potts, an instructor at Country Club of the South, held a share of the lead on the back nine before a late bogey. He also shot 67-70. Owen, an assistant at Dunwoody CC, finished strong with birdies on three of his last six holes for a final round 69.

"We both had putts at it," Murchison said of the lengthy playoff. "But for some reason they would not fall.

"One of my goals at the beginning of the year was to win my first Section event. It's unfortunate I had to win that way. Jeff played a great round."

Both players had several excellent birdie chances to end the playoff well before it finally concluded. Murchison missed from about 8 feet on 18 on the first extra hole. He missed again from a foot or two farther from the hole to send the playoff participants back to 18 for a third time. This time Murchison needed a

gradually diminishing. Tournament Director **Pat Day** opted for a change of pace and sent the two back to the 17th. Both players hit excellent approach shots to the par 4, but left themselves slippery birdie putts from above the hole. Both barely missed, with Hull having the shorter putt of the two.

With daylight fading, it was back to 18 for a fourth time. Murchison pulled his tee shot under a tree, and played a nicely judged run-up shot that ended up in the back fringe. Hull's second was long, but a soft pitch from the rough settled within three feet of the cup. After Murchison holed out for par, Hull's putt cruelly spun off the right lip just as he began bending over to pick the ball out of the cup.

"There was nothing I did I can be disappointed about," said Hull, who was looking to win his ninth different Section event.

Hull had excellent birdie opportunities at 15, 17 and 18 in regulation, but all refused to fall.

"I did everything but make 'em," Hull offered. "And I had a couple of good looks in the playoff."

Hull started the day three strokes behind Murchison, who got off to a strong start with birdies on two of the first three holes. Hull birdied holes 2 and 3 after an opening bogey, and after a clutch par save at the 5th, ran off five birdies in a row beginning at the 6th. He rolled in a long birdie putt at the par-5 7th and came close to an ace at the par-3 8th.

Birdies on 9 and 10 got Hull to 9-under for the tournament, two in front of the field, but his birdie run ended at the 11th. A bogey at the long par-4 13th



Jeff Hull

on the short, par-3 11th. Like Hull, Murchison bogeyed the 13th, but righted himself with a birdie at the par-5 15th.

With both Hull and Potts stalling down the stretch, the door was open for Murchison and Weinhart, who were in the final group and more than a hole behind the group in front of them.

Weinhart, who opened with a 67 to trail Murchison by a shot, started his second round with a birdie after hitting a provisional tee shot, finding his first drive in bounds. He matched Murchison's birdies at 3 and 10 and moved into a tie for the lead when he chipped in for birdie at 13. Another birdie at the 15th put him one ahead of Hull and two in front of Murchison, but the six-time Georgia PGA Player of the Year missed a pair of short par putts at 16 and 18.

Murchison stiffed his approach on the 17th to a foot to tie Weinhart and Hull, and had to battle for par on the 18th after his tee shot almost went out of bounds to the right. Weinhart also drove poorly on the hole and put his second shot in a greenside bunker, lipping out his par putt from about 8 feet.

Sonny Skinner matched Hull for low round of the day, shooting a 67 to take 6th at 139. Skinner was 5-under after an eagle at the 10th, but was even par from that point, closing with a bogey after getting to 6-under with a birdie at 15.

The battle for low amateur was an all-Berkeley Hills competition, with **Bubba Gwyn** edging out **Mike Cromer** thanks to a pair of late birdies at 15 and 17. Gwyn shot 69-71 to tie for 7th overall with Rivermont CC head professional **Matthew Evans** (67-73) and Marietta CC Director of Golf **Stephen Keppler** (68-72).

Cromer (67-74) and **Craig Stevens** (70-71) tied for 10th at 141.

With his win, Murchison moved into first place in the Georgia PGA Player of the Year standings ahead of **Clark Spratlin**, Weinhart and Stevens. 🏆



Bill Murchison

"We both had putts at it. But for some reason, they would not fall." —Bill Murchison

the playoff, with the lead changing hands on several occasions before Murchison and Hull emerged as the last ones standing.

Both finished at 8-under 136 on the relatively short but testy Berkeley Hills layout, which features some of the finest putting surfaces in all of Atlanta. The club has long been known for the quality of its greens, and was among the first in the metro area to convert them to the Champions Bermuda surfaces that have

delicate chip from over the green to save par and extend the playoff, which shifted to the adjacent 9th hole.

Both players had good looks at birdie the first time they played the 9th, with Murchison needing another deft chip to save par the second time around on the hole after driving in a fairway bunker. Hull again had a birdie opportunity, but his putt from around 10 feet curled low.

With the crowd watching from the deck above the 18th and 9th greens

dropped him into a tie for the lead, and he was the first in an 8-under after three close calls on the last four holes.

After his hot start, Murchison quickly cooled off, missing short par putts at 4 and 6 before taking a third bogey at the 8th. He was four behind Hull when he made the turn, and said he "was not thinking clearly" during his shaky stretch on the opening nine.

Murchison rebounded with a birdie on the par-5 10th, and followed with another



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Late surge lifts Noll to State Am title

Wins event again after several close calls

By Mike Blum

David Noll faced challenges from two players in the final round of the 2011 GSGA Championship, played last month at Cherokee Town & Country Club.

Noll, who won the state's amateur championship in 2003 at Pinetree CC, has been an annual contender since, but has been denied several times by three of the best college players to emerge from Georgia in recent years — **Brian Harman**, **Harris English** and **Russell Henley**.

From 2005-09, the Dalton resident finished 2nd, T6, T5, 3rd and 2nd, with the three UGA standouts winning the State Am four of the five years.

This time, Noll had to battle Georgia Tech freshman **Anders Albertson** and fellow mid-amateur **Billy Mitchell**, and more than met the challenge.

Noll fired a final round 66, carding birdies on four of the last six holes to hold off the fast-finishing Mitchell, who closed with a 65 that included five birdies in an 8-hole stretch beginning at the 9th before a bogey on the final hole.

Thanks to Noll's sizzling finish, he wound up with a 4-stroke margin over Mitchell, posting a 6-under 274 total over the par-70 Cherokee layout. They were the only two players in the field to break par for 72 holes, with Albertson taking 3rd at even par 280.

Noll began the final round with a slim one-stroke lead over Albertson, who beat Noll in the finals of the Atlanta Amateur Match Play Championship last year, an event Noll had won three times the previous five years.

Albertson, who lives in Woodstock and was an early entrant at Georgia Tech earlier this year, birdied the first hole to pull even with Noll, but dropped back with a bogey at the second. After matching pars for three holes, Albertson seemed poised to tie the lead after a superb approach shot to the 6th left him with a short birdie putt.

But after Noll rolled in a lengthy birdie try up the slope, Albertson's short but slippery downhill putt trickled a few

feet past the cup and he missed his comeback attempt for par.

Instead of being tied for the lead, Albertson was suddenly three back, and his deficit reached five strokes when he double-bogeyed the par-3 seventh after missing the green and coming up short with his pitch shot.

Noll was five ahead of Albertson and six in front of defending champion **Lee Knox** of Augusta at the turn, with Mitchell moving into second place after going out in 2-under.

With birdies at 12, 14, 15 and 16, Mitchell cut Noll's seemingly comfortable lead to one shot. But Noll was determined to retain his lead, something he had been unable to do after being in front midway through the tournament in 2006 and last year.

After 12 solid but uneventful holes, Noll was even par for the day and three in front of Mitchell. His only slip came at the eighth, where he missed a short par putt that served a bigger purpose.

"That was the best thing that happened to me," Noll said of his miss at the eighth.

"I was thinking about my acceptance speech and as embarrassed as I was, that brought me back to reality."

Noll went back to fairways, greens and pars for three holes before finding a fairway bunker at the 13th. His second shot to a very tight pin position came to rest about 8 feet from the cup and he holed the putt for just his second birdie of the day.

With Mitchell making his move a few groups ahead, Noll hit it close at the par-3 14th, but lipped out his birdie try. He reached the front fringe at the par-5 15th in two and nearly holed his eagle putt, tapping in for birdie.

The clincher came at the 16th, where Noll drove in the rough but was able to hit his short second to within 10 feet and rolled it in for another birdie. Another tee shot in the rough led to a lengthy birdie putt at 17, but a well-judged lag down the slope left him with a tap-in for par.

With Mitchell bogeying the 18th, Noll's lead was three coming to the final hole, and he closed out his victory in style, rolling in a sizeable birdie putt for a 66 and a four-shot win.

Considering that he had come so close in the tournament in recent years, and

had given up two 36-hole leads, Noll admitted to feeling some nerves, but settled down as the round began.

He bombed his drive on the first hole ("The best shot I hit all day"), and said "from that point, I just played my game."

The 38-year-old Noll had tears in his eyes as he rolled in the birdie putt at 18, remembering his late father, who died shortly after he won his first State Am title eight years earlier.

"This puts me in an elite class," Noll second of his second title, joining **Henley**, **Danny Yates**, **Jim Gabrielson**, **Carter Mize** and six-time champion **Allen Doyle** as the only multiple winners of the championship over the past 50 years.

Noll has won both his State Am titles in metro Atlanta, and will be looking to add a third victory in the event next year at Ansley Golf Club's Settindown Creek, where he finished two shots behind the winner in 2007. In 2013, the championship will return to Pinetree, where Noll won for the first time in '03.

Knox, who plays on the golf team at Alabama, made a strong showing as defending champion, opening with a 67 and hanging close to the lead before some struggles on Cherokee's outstanding new greens knocked him out of contention. He wound up tied for 9th at 286.

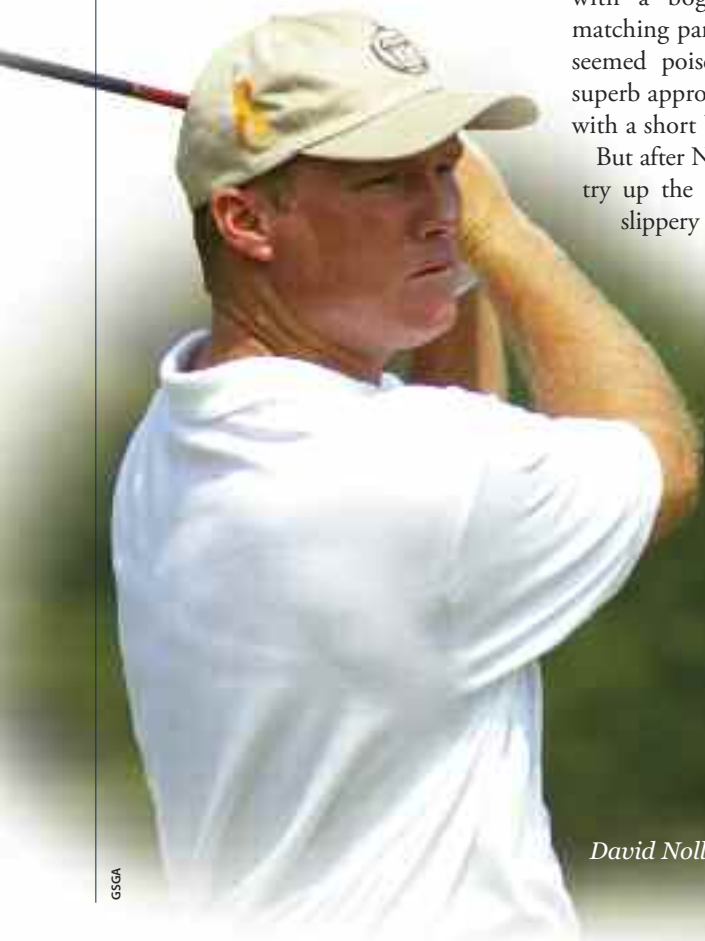
Bill Jones III, recently named the golf coach at Darton College in Albany, shot a second round 68 to take the 36-hole lead at 137, but shot 148 on the weekend and finished T7 at 285.

Noll moved into contention with a second round 67 to put him one back heading to the weekend, and took the lead after the third round with a steady 70.

Albertson, who stayed close the entire tournament with scores of 69-69-71, closed with a 71 to take 3rd behind Mitchell, whose final round 65 matched the low score for the day and the tournament. Cherokee member **Danny Whigham** also shot 65 the fourth round, opening with a 30 on the back nine, his first nine of the day.

Alpharetta's **Franco Castro**, who is on the golf team at LSU, was also a contender throughout, shooting 71 the final day to place 4th at 283.

Duluth's **Seth Reeves**, Albertson's teammate at Georgia Tech, tied for 5th at 284 after a closing 67, tying recent Armstrong Atlantic grad **Ridge Purcell**, who opened with a 68. ☺



David Noll

"This puts me in an elite class."

—Two-time State Am champion David Noll

English joins Henley as Nationwide champion

Recent UGA grads earn early Walker Cup spots

By Mike Blum

After watching teammate **Russell Henley** hog most of the headlines for the past year, **Harris English** waited until after he completed his career on the UGA golf team to grab some time in the spotlight.

English capped an exceptional stretch of golf with a victory in the recent Nationwide Tour event in Columbus, O., one of the most prominent events on the tour. That gives the 2011 UGA golf team two Nationwide Tour wins this season, following Henley's victory on home turf in the Stadion Classic at the UGA golf course.

Prior to this year, only one amateur had won in the Nationwide Tour's 20-year history, but that number has doubled in recent months thanks to a pair of talented 2011 UGA graduates.

His win in Columbus made it two titles in just over a week for English, who

won the Southern Amateur the previous weekend. A few weeks before that, he reached the semifinals of the USGA Public Links Championship (Chip shots, page 26), part of his Summer drive that earned him a spot on the U.S. Walker Cup team, which will play Great Britain/Ireland Sept. 10-11 in Scotland.

English, who is moving from his parents' home in Thomasville to St. Simons Island, turned in an impressive effort from start to finish in his Nationwide Tour victory, capped by a highlight reel birdie on the 72nd hole.

Fellow amateur **John Peterson** of LSU led English by one shot heading to the final hole, but his tee shot wound up in an awful lie in the rough, resulting in a bogey. English, meanwhile, launched a massive drive over the corner of the dogleg left, leaving him barely 50 yards for his second shot on a hole that measures almost 440 yards.

English hit his second shot to around 10 feet, and after Peterson made bogey,

the recent UGA graduate holed the putt for birdie and victory. English would have received the winner's check of \$144,000, but as an amateur had to turn it down, leaving Atlanta resident **Kyle Reifers** to take home one of the biggest checks awarded on the tour.

"That's what you dream about growing up," English said to the media after his victory. "You want to put yourself in those positions to win. This is what you spend hours and hours practicing for as a little kid."

"When I saw that ball disappear it was the greatest feeling in the world. It's pretty unbelievable."

English had played well in his two appearances in the Stadion Classic, placing 27th in 2010 and 18th earlier this year, but the event in Columbus was his first pro start away from Athens.

Playing on the highly regarded Scarlet course on the Ohio State campus, English turned in four exceptional rounds, beginning with back-to-back



Harris English

scores of 66 that placed him among the leaders from day one. English did not have a bogey on his card during the second round, and followed with another bogey-free effort the next day, carding a

[See Nationwide Tour, page 28]

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Floyd low Georgian in Dogwood event

Augusta State golfer **Taylor Floyd** of Macon was the top finisher among the Georgia contingent in the Dogwood Invitational at Druid Hills GC, tying for 4th at 15-under 273.

Floyd finished seven strokes behind tournament winner **Nate McCoy** from Iowa State, who shot 22-under 266 to win by two strokes over **Bobby Wyatt** from Mobile, Ala. McCoy posted scores of 66-68-67-65. After an opening 73, Floyd shot 67-67-66 to make a steady move up the leader board.

Georgia Tech's **Paul Haley** tied for 10th at 276, with Duluth's **Seth Reeves**, also a Tech golfer, T12 at 277. Reeves shot 64-66 the second and third rounds, notching 10 birdies the second day. He was among the contenders the final day before taking a 9 on the par-4 12th, shooting 73 on the day.

Woodstock's **Anders Albertson**, also a Yellow Jacket golfer, tied for 17th at 279 along with Georgia Bulldog **Bryden Macpherson**, the 2011 British Amateur champion. Tech freshman **Ollie Schniederjans** of Powder Springs and recent Georgia grad **Russell Henley** of Macon were T20 at 280.

In other amateur events in July:

English takes Southern Am: Prior to winning the Nationwide Tour event in Columbus, O., recent UGA standout **Harris English** won the Southern Amateur at the Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Fla. He fired a final round 65 for a 9-under 275 total to win by three strokes after trailing by four after 54 holes.

Georgia Tech golfer **Richy Werenski** tied for 2nd at 278, with recent Tech player **Paul Haley**. Tech freshman **Ollie Schniederjans** was T22 at 285.

The victory earns English an exemption into the 2012 **Arnold Palmer** Invitational at Bay Hill.

Georgia Tech golfer **James White** of Acworth tied for 5th in the Players Amateur on Hilton Head Island, posting a 280 total to finish four shots behind Clemson's **Corbin Mills**, the 2011 U.S. Public Links champion.

UGA incoming freshman **Nicholas Reach** took second in the Palmetto Amateur in Aiken, S.C., losing in a playoff to Auburn golfer **Will McCurdy**. Both players shot 10-under 270, with McCurdy posting a final round 69 and Reach recording a 70.

Alpharetta's **Billy Kennerly**, a Clemson



Katie Burnett

GSGA

signee, closed with a 66 to tie for 5th at 276. Also tying for 5th was Augusta's **John Engler**, a former Clemson standout and PGA Tour player who has regained his amateur status. Engler shot 67-69-69 before a 71 in the final round.

English to semis in U.S. PubLinks

Harris English made a run at earning a Masters invitation in 2012, reaching the semifinals of the U.S. Public Links Championship at Oregon's Bandon Dunes Resort.

English tied for 3rd in qualifying at 2-over 143, and won his opening match 4&2 before rallying from a 2-down deficit after 10 holes to win his second match on the 19th hole. English, who birdied four of his last eight holes, was 1-down after 13 in the third round before again rallying for a 1-up victory.

In the quarterfinals, English trailed for the third straight match, but came back from 2-down after 11 with three birdies over the final six holes.

His string of comebacks ended in the semifinals, where he lost 5&3 to eventual champion **Corbin Mills** of Clemson.

Also qualifying for match play were Covington's **Taylor Smith**, Georgia Tech golfer **Minghao Wang** and Alpharetta's **Greg O'Connor**, who survived a 6-players-for-2-spots playoff. Wang won his opening match 2-up before losing 3&2 in the second round. Smith lost his opening match 4&3 while O'Connor drew No. 1 seed Mills in the first round and lost 4&2

after being only 1-down after 11.

U.S. Amateur qualifying: **Scott Davenport** of Marietta and Georgia Tech golfer **Seth Reeves** of Duluth qualified for this month's U.S. Amateur. Both players shot 137 at Capital City Club's Crabapple Course and advanced from a 4-for-3 playoff. Duluth's **Ben Greene**, a Kennesaw State golfer, also shot 137 but lost the playoff.

John Engler and **Ollie Schniederjans** shared medalist honors at the Standard Club with 5-under 139 totals. Engler shot 70-69, with Albertson slipping to a 74 after firing a 65 in the motning round. Kennesaw State golfer **Matt Nagy** of Buena Vista got the fourth and final spot at 142, taking a playoff over Kennesaw's **Christian Raynor**.

Savannah's **Jay Degenhart** won a 2-for-1 playoff in Bluffton, S.C., to qualify. Also qualifying were UGA golfers **Michael Cromie** and **Keith Mitchell**, who were competing in their home states. Cromie shot 135 to earn medalist honors in Clemmons, N.C., while Mitchell earned the second of two spots in Knoxville with a 139 total.

Burnett captures Women's Top 60

Brunswick's Katie Burnett, a member of the South Carolina women's golf team, won the GSGA Women's Top 60 event at the Brickyard at Riverside in Macon, winning a playoff over former UGA golfer **Kendall Wright** of Sugar Hill.

Burnett shot 69-72—141, forcing a

playoff with a birdie on the 18th hole in the second round. Wright shot 70-71 with birdies on three of the final holes in the final round, but lost when Burnett birdied No. 17, the second playoff hole.

Yugene Lee of Athens was 3rd at 143, followed by Lawrenceville's **Lauren Court** and Bonaire's **Lacey Fears** at 145. **Margaret Shirley**, who recently left her job as assistant coach at Georgia to take a similar position at Auburn, her alma mater, tied for 6th at 147 with Lilburn's **Lindsay Adams**. Metter's **Tess Fordham** was 8th at 148.

Burnett also won the Women's Eastern Amateur in Charleston, S.C., leading from wire to wire after an opening 67. She finished at even par 216, winning by two strokes.

Burger falls in WAPL to eventual runner-up

UGA golfer Emilie Burger of Hoschton qualified for match play in the USGA Women's Public Links Championship at Bandon Dunes, losing 1-up in the second round to Texan **Marissa Dodd**, who went on to advance to the finals.

Burger shot 76-69—145 to finish 2nd in qualifying, four strokes behind the medalist, and won her opening match 2&1. Burger lost the first hole to Dodd and never pulled even.

Milledgeville junior **Ashlan Ramsey** lost her opening match on the 19th hole after being 4-up after nine, while Kennesaw State golfer **Ket Preamchuen** lost 2&1 in the second round after winning her first match on the 19th hole.

Preamchuen, Lee and Shirley all qualified for the U.S. Women's Amateur, with Preamchuen taking 2nd at Settindown Creek with a 71. Lee tied for 4th in the qualifier at 74, with Shirley shooting a 75 and taking the final spot in a playoff. Wright tied for 7th in a qualifier in Wellington, Fla., and claimed the final spot in a multi-player playoff.

Silvers wins 4th Peach State event

Savannah's Mark Silvers scored his fourth victory on the Peach State Golf Tour this year, taking a 54-hole event at Nob North in Cohutta in a three-way playoff.

[See Chip shots, page 29]



Justin Connelly

Connelly captures East Lake event

Justin Connelly of McDonough won the recent Georgia PGA Junior Tour tournament played over two days at both Charlie Yates Golf Course and historic East Lake Golf Club.

Connelly shot 2-under 56 the first day on the Charlie Yates executive layout, then fired a 3-under 69 for a 5-under 125 total and a 5-stroke victory. **Joshua Crews** of Albany tied for 2nd at 130, shooting 71 at East Lake, along with **Aaron DeSilva** of Stone Mountain, who opened with a 5-under 53 at Charlie Yates.

Alpharetta's **Spencer Yi** was the 14-15 age group winner at 57-74—131, two strokes ahead of Griffin's **Jake Harpe**. **Drew Minner** of Alpharetta was 3rd at 134. **Will Chandler** of Atlanta shot 2-under on both courses to win the 11-13 division at 126, six strokes ahead of Duluth's **David Grandomenico**.

Carlisle Withers of Atlanta shot 153 to take the girls division, with Atlanta's **Katherine Dyer** 2nd at 158. **Alexis Taylor** of Stone Mountain was the 11-14 winner at 162.

Cokely claims 2 GPGA titles

Duluth's Spencer Cokely won back-to-back Georgia PGA Junior Tour events at Stone Mountain GC and Glen Arven.

Cokely shot 6-under 138 (68-70) at Glen Arven in Thomasville to win the boys



Carlisle Withers

division by nine strokes and his age division by 15 over Moultrie's **Bowen Aquero**. **Carter Thompson** of Thomasville shot 147 to win the 14-15 age group by 16 over **Luke Howard**, also from Thomasville.

Braden Traylor of Moultrie shot 157 to take first in the 11-13 division. The girls winners were **Angie Varona** (15-18) of San Jose, who shot 71-71—142 to win by 18, and **Karson Stone** of Thomasville (11-14).

Cokely shot 74-72—146 at the demanding Stone Mountain layout to win the boys title by two over Dunwoody's **Ryan Elmore**. **Victor Choi** of Duluth was 3rd at 151. **Brett Barron** of Suwanee was the 14-15 winner at 156, four shots ahead of Alpharetta's **Scotty Hoffman**. **Brett Ammons** of McDonough was 3rd at 162.

Atlanta's **Wallis Fairvalley** was the girls



Spencer Cokely

overall winner, with **Alexis Taylor** the 11-14 winner prior to her victory at East Lake.

The Georgia PGA Junior Tour also held a pair of one-day events last month at Hawks Ridge and Chestatee, with Cokely claiming a third straight victory at Hawks Ridge. He shot 1-under 71 and won a playoff over Atlanta's **Thomas Davenport**.

Scotty Hoffman shot 75 to win the 14-15 age group by one over Alpharetta's **Eric Grahek**. **Dylan Green** of Atlanta and **Griffin Joiner** of Kathleen also shot 76 to tie for 3rd in the 16-18 division. Atlanta's **Jake Lawson** fired a 70 to win the 11-13 age group by nine over **Will Chandler**.

The girls division ended in a three-way tie at 81, with Braselton's **Darby Gentry** winning the playoff. Also shooting 81 were **Margaret Yeh** of Cumming and **Sally Morgan** of Milton.

Austin Booker Dahlongega and **Ryan Elmore** both shot 2-under 69 at Chestatee, with Booker taking the playoff. **Aaron Levinson** of Canton was 3rd with a 70.

Sterling DeSantis of Johns Creek shot 71 to win the 14-15 age group by one over Snellville's **Patrick Kendrick**, with Duluth's **Alex Kim** shooting a 76 to win the 11-13 division by four.

Ari Roberts of Buford shot 74 to take the girls title, with Yeh 2nd at 77 and Gentry 3rd at 78.

Stackhouse, Ramsey win 2 in U.S. Girls

Georgians Mariah Stackhouse (Riverdale) and **Ashlan Ramsey** (Milledgeville) reached the third round in the U.S. Girls Junior Championship at Chicago's Olympia Fields before being eliminated.

Stackhouse tied for 4th in qualifying at 146, and won her opening match 5&4 over Fayetteville's **Rachel Dai**, who tied for 60th in qualifying at 153. Stackhouse won her second match 4&3 but lost 4&3 in the third round after being only 1-down after 10 holes.

Ramsey, who was T28 in qualifying at 150, won her first two matches 5&4 and 2&1 before losing 1-up in the third round. She lost the first hole in that match and was either 1 or 2 down the rest of the way.

Katy Harris of St. Simons, **Emily Kurey** of Alpharetta and **Annie Swords** of Newnan all qualified for the event but failed to reach match play.

Duluth's **Andy Shim** was the lone Georgian to reach match play in the U.S.

Junior in Washington, losing his opening match on the 23rd hole. Shim, who tied for 36th in qualifying at 149, birdied three of the last five holes to extend the match, but lost when his opponent made birdie on the fifth extra hole.

Preston Heyward of Duluth, **Trevor Smith** of Newnan, **Greyson Sigg** of Augusta and **Michael Hines** of Acworth all missed qualifying for match play.

Hines came into the tournament off an outstanding showing in the Future Masters in Dothan, Ala., shooting 12-under 198 to win the event by six strokes. Hines tied a course record with 62 in the opening round, and followed with scores of 71 and 65.

McCoy places 2nd in top AJGA event

Lee McCoy of Clarkesville tied for second in the American Junior Golf Association Rolex Tournament of Champions, one of the most prestigious events in junior golf. McCoy shot 1-over 289 at Oregon's Sunriver Resort to tie for 2nd with five other players, seven strokes behind the winner.

Clemson-bound **Billy Kennerly** of Alpharetta tied for 22nd at 298, with Kennesaw State signee **Jimmy Beck** of Columbus T26 at 299.

Love second at Pinehurst: Sea Island's **Dru Love** tied for second in an AJGA event in Pinehurst, N.C., five shots behind the winner. Love was part of a three-way tie at 2-under 214.

In the girls division, **Jessica Hoang** of North Augusta, S.C., was 2nd at 217, four behind the winner, with Suwanee's **Rachel Dai** 6th at 228.

Pisciotta captures wire-to-wire win

Alpharetta's Michael Pisciotta went wire-to-wire to win an AJGA event in Huntsville, Ala., finishing five strokes ahead of the field with a 6-under 207 total.

Pisciotta, one of the youngest competitors in the event, shot 68-71-68 and was one of just three players to break par for 54 holes. **Jared O'Kelley** of Canton closed with a 66 to tie for 4th at 213, with **Ted Moon** of Lilburn T7 at 215.

Haley Austin of McDonough was 4th in the girls division at 221, with **Bailey Tardy**

[See Junior, page 28]

Juniors

[Continued from page 27]

of Norcross 9th at 228.

In Shelby, N.C., **Mary Ellen Shuman** of St. Simons Island tied for 6th in an AJGA event. **Isabella Skinner** of Cumming was 3rd in an AJGA Junior All-Star (age 12-15) in Sarasota, Fla. **Janet Mao** of Johns Creek was 6th at 224. **Wyatt Larkin** of Morganton was T9 in the boys division at 216, with **Sean Murphy** of Decatur T18 after opening with a 69.

Heyward captures Hawks Ridge event

Duluth's **Preston Heyward** needed six playoff holes to win the SJGT **Heath Slocum** Invitational, played at Hawks Ridge in Ball Ground. Heyward, three behind after

the first round, closed with a 69 for a 1-under 143 total and birdied the sixth extra hole to take the title.

James Garrett Bernhardt of Atlanta was 3rd in the 16-19 division at 144, with **John Michael Russo** of Alpharetta 4th at 145. **Tyler Young** of Kennesaw shot 75-71—146 to win the 14-15 age group by one over **Brett Barron**, who led by six after shooting 69 the first day.

In other SJGT events in July:

Tyler Joiner of Albany won the SJGT Match Play Championship at the RTJ Golf Trail Grand National course in Opelika, defeating Atlanta's **Jack Larkin** in the finals. The two combined for 10 birdies in the title match. **Jacob Joiner**, Tyler's brother, also reached match play, losing in the quarterfinals.

Buster Bruton shot 73-69—142 at Brunswick CC to win by a stroke over **William Grotto** of Savannah. **Josh Turner** of Hazlehurst was 3rd in the 16-19 division at 145. **Paula Hong** of Duluth was the girls overall and 12-14 age group winner at 147,

with **Mary Ellen Shuman** the 15-19 winner at 149.

At TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., age group winners included **Salil Ghamande** of Evans (boys 12-13) and **Madison Caldwell** of Dawsonville (girls 12-14). Ghamande shot 72-76—148 and won a playoff over Barron, with Caldwell posting a 176 total to win her age group by four.

Dru Love was 2nd in the boys 16-19 division at 150, three behind the winner, with **Carter Mobley** of Evans 2nd in boys 14-15 at 156, two in back of the winner.

Eunice Yi of Evans shot 72-76—148 to win the girls division in a SJGT event by four in Birmingham. **Kyle Mueller** shot 146 to take 2nd in boys 14-15, two behind the winner.

Herbert wins twice in SJGT tournaments

Emee Herbert of Johns Creek won back-

to-back tournaments on the Southeastern Junior Golf Tour, taking first at the Furman University course in Greenville, S.C., and the Robert Trent Jones Trail Capitol Hill course in Prattville, Ala.

Herbert shot 153 to win the girls division at Furman, with **Megan Sabol** of Evans the 12-14 winner at 155.

Emmanuel Kountakis of Augusta was the boys winner at 73-72—145, with Savannah's **Howard Hickey** 2nd in the 16-19 age group at 146. **Buster Bruton** of Dallas shot 75-75—150 to take the 14-15 division by one over **Kyle Mueller** of Watkinsville, with **Walker Bottomley** of Milton shooting 68-70—138 to win the 12-13 age group by 12 over **Spencer Ralston** of Gainesville.

Herbert shot 73-77—150 in Prattville to win by 10 strokes. **Alexander DeRosa** of Atlanta was 2nd in boys 12-13 at 159, two behind the winner. ☺

Nationwide Tour

[Continued from page 25]

68 to begin the final round one behind Peterson.

After beginning the final day at 14 and 13-under par, both English and Peterson were even par coming to the 18th hole.

"I don't think either of us had our best stuff today," English observed. "I misread a lot of putts today. We just had to grind

it out. I really wanted him to make that putt at 18. That would have been the perfect circumstance."

English led the entire field in driving distance for the week, averaging a whopping 327 yards on measured drives, including 351 in the second round. He was 10th on the week in greens in regulation, hitting 16 of 18 in both the third and fourth rounds, and was 5th and 10th in the two primary putting stats, requiring just 22 in the second round when he was 9-for-9 scrambling for par.

Things were a little different the final day, as English had 34 putts. But his struggles on the green did not deter from a victory that will make his rookie season as a professional a much less stressful one than it could have been.

Like Henley, English will defer turning pro until later this year, and has earned a spot on the Walker Cup team along with his fellow UGA graduate. Both players will be fully exempt on the Nationwide Tour next year should they fail to earn their PGA Tour cards at Q-school.

"This one had a different feel to it coming down the stretch," English said. "My future was in my hands coming down the last couple of holes. I knew that a win here would be big for me in the future and give me a tour to play on when I turn pro."

English and Henley both enjoyed outstanding careers at

Georgia, and combined for three straight victories in the GSGA Championship. English won just before beginning his freshman season in Athens and Henley took the next two State Ams, with English placing 2nd and 3rd.

Henley was just a bit ahead of English for most of their time in Athens, and made a national splash with a strong showing in the 2010 U.S. Open, something he repeated this year after his Nationwide Tour victory in Athens.

English assumed the No. 1 spot in the Georgia lineup when Henley struggled as a senior, and the two led the Bulldogs to the finals of the NCAA Championship, losing to defending national champion Augusta State.

They are guaranteed a spot on the 2012 Nationwide Tour, which should again feature a strong contingent of Georgia residents and former collegians, although several of those competing on the tour this year will likely be playing on the PGA Tour in 2012.

Five players with Georgia ties were among the top 15 on the money list after the Nationwide event in Columbus, with two others just outside The 25. A total of 10 Georgians were in the top 60 in earnings, the cutoff for fully exempt status for 2012, with six others between 61 and 82, comfortably inside the top 100 required to retain partial status for next season.

With a win and several other top finishes, ex-Georgia Bulldog and two-time heart transplant recipient **Erik Compton** was 3rd in earnings and assured of a spot on the PGA Tour next year. Reifers was 5th largely due to his finish in Columbus.

Augusta's **Scott Brown** (three top-3 finishes) was 13th, followed by Clayton State's **Will Wilcox** (a pair of 3rd place showings) in 14th and **Roberto Castro** (Alpharetta/Georgia Tech) 15th on the strength of eight top-20 finishes the eight times he has made the cut, including two ties for 4th.

Albany's **Josh Broadaway** vaulted to 26th after consecutive 5th place finishes, including a profitable week in Columbus. Ringgold's **Luke List** had an early season tie for 2nd, but after missing the cut in Columbus, fell from 25 to 32. LaFayette's **John Kimbell** has also been slipping down the list after a strong start, and was 48th, with veteran **Paul Claxton** (St. Simons/UGA) heading in the opposite direction after some solid recent efforts, moving up to 55th.

Nicholas Thompson (Georgia Tech) and **Clayton Rask** (Hampton) were right around the top 60 at 58 and 61 respectively, with **Brent Delahoussaye**, who grew up in Alpharetta, 69th.

After going more than an year without making a cut, ex-Georgia Bulldog **Brendan Todd** enjoyed a stretch of excellent play, but dropped to 70th after missing five straight cuts. **Major Manning** (Clarkesville/Augusta State) also was struggling after an excellent start and was 78th.

Veteran **Scott Dunlap** (Duluth) was 81st, with **Justin Bolli** (Roswell/UGA) showing signs of life after a poor season on the PGA Tour in 2010 and a shaky start this year, reaching 82nd after a top 10 in Mexico. ☺



Roberto Castro

IMAGES BY AL KOOSTRA

Women's Open

[Continued from page 20]

tour status is more limited than that of Carter.

Defending champion **Emilie Burger**, who plays on the women's golf team at Georgia, missed the tournament due to medical reasons, while UGA assistant women's coach **Margaret Shirley**, a two-time Georgia Women's Open winner and frequent contender, was a late withdrawal due to work requirements.

Mariah Stackhouse, who won in 2009 and was third behind Burger and Shirley last year, was playing in the U.S. Women's Open that week.

Among those in the field were former LPGA Tour player **Angela Jerman**, two-time GWO champion **Krissie Register Sullivan** and **Laura Coble**, the state's top female amateur and the only other ex-winner in the field. Coble tied for 6th at 147 with Jerman T8 at 148.

Fears was 4th overall and low amateur at 144, with Milledgeville's **Ashlan Ramsey**, one of the state's top juniors, 5th at 145. UGA signee **Amelia Hill** of St. Simons tied Coble for 6th at 146, with Athens' **Yugene Lee**, former UGA golfer **Kendall Wright** and pro **Mari Chun** T8 at 150. 🏌️

Chip shots

[Continued from page 26]

Silvers finished with a 15-under 201 total, posting scores of 69-67-65. **Jimmy Brandt** recorded identical scores each day, while **Gordon Strother** of St. Simons Island shot 66-69-66. Silvers earned \$10,000 to raise his total for the year to \$38,165, well in front of Forsyth's **Jay McLuen** in second place.

Brett Munson was 4th at 202, taking the lead to the final round but being passed by all three playoff participants after closing with a 68. McLuen and Dalton's **Matt Hughes** tied for 6th at 204, with Hughes leading after an opening 63.

In other recent Peach State Tour tournaments:

Wade Binfield of Fayetteville shot 69-66—135 to win at the Auburn University Club by two strokes over Brandt and Duluth's **Parker Beck**, who shared the opening round lead at 67. Athens' **Kyle Stiles** was 4th at 138 and Albany's **Brandon Anthony** placed 5th at 139.

Thanks to a 12-under 60 in the second round, **Rick Cochran** won by five shots at Orchard Hills with a 21-under 123 total. Lilburn's **John Saari** tied for 4th at 130 with a final round 62 and Binfield was 7th at 131.

Silvers picked up his third win of the season in the Balsam Mountain (N.C.) Classic, shooting 12-under 128 to win by five. His opening round 63 was one of five course record scores turned in by Peach State Tour players in recent events, with McLuen, Strother, Munson and Cochran all breaking previous marks.

Edstrom 2nd, 5th on Hooters Tour

Former Norcross resident Reid Edstrom put together back-to-back top-5 showings on the Hooters Tour in North Carolina.

Edstrom, who played his college golf at Auburn and now lives there, tied for 5th in the first of the two tournaments, shooting 11-under 277. He came back the next week to post a 21-under 263 total, but wound up five strokes behind the winner despite scores of 64-67-67-65. Edstrom collected just over \$20,000 for his two-tournament run of success and is currently 12th on the tour's money list with almost \$45,000.

eGolf Tour: Covington's **Jonathan Fricke** tied for 4th in an eGolf Tour event in Aiken, S.C., finishing one shot out of a 3-way playoff with a 14-under 274 total.

Fricke was tied for the lead after 54

holes and was ahead late in the final round, but three-putted two of the last four holes, including the 18th, for a final round 71. Fricke recorded eight birdies in both the first and third rounds, shooting 68 and 66. Augusta's **Cortland Lowe** shot 63 in the first round but faded to a tie for 40th.

Ex-Georgia Tech golfer **Chesson Hadley** took 3rd in an eGolf event in Kannapolis, N.C., five shots behind the winner. Hadley closed with a 66 for a 17-under 268 total. Former Georgia Bulldog **Adam Mitchell** was 4th at 269 and recent Augusta State graduate **Carter Newman** of Evans was T5 at 271. Towne Lake Hills assistant **Chris Nicol** tied for 10th at 273, with Fricke and Sandersville's **David Robinson** T15 at 274. 🏌️

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Course Reviews

Rivermont Golf & Country Club (Private)

3130 Rivermont Parkway, Johns Creek
770-993-1779; www.rivermontcountryclub.com

STAFF: Chris Cupit is the General Manager; Matthew Evans & Roger Keller are the PGA Golf Professionals.

PAR/YARDAGE: Rivermont is a par 72 with four sets of tees: Red (7,112 yards); White (6,470); Blue (5,742); Gold (5,003).

COURSE RATING/SLOPE: Red (74.6/139); White (71.6/131); Blue (68.4/123); Gold (69.4/125).

ABOUT THE COURSE: A Mike Riley renovation five years ago has significantly changed the look and nature of the popular but low-key club, which has been around since the early 1970s. Riley took the solid, understated Joe Lee design and gave it a new character and look. Riley's renovations have enhanced the natural feel of the layout, with native grasses and shallow, brown sand bunkers that give the course more of a retro appearance. Riley's changes were much more than cosmetic, with the back tees adding a hefty 345 yards and the next set 90 yards longer despite four holes that are a total of 100 yards shorter than pre-renovation. The new greens have considerably more movement than they did originally, with some interesting swales and ridges that will put your putting touch to the test when you have to negotiate them from long range. One thing that has remained the same from Lee's original design is the need to drive the ball accurately. With creeks lining a large percentage of holes and OB and tree lines also very much in play, errant tee shots will be harshly penalized. Although Rivermont still has its share of bunkers, Riley has altered Lee's surround-the-greens style, with few approach shots having to clear sand to reach the putting surface. The course features its share of standout holes both visually and strategically, with one of the strongest 1/18 combos around. The par-4 first is one of the toughest openers you'll encounter, and the first example of the danger that awaits if you stray to either side. Other highlights are a drivable but perilous short par 4 (11), a long, narrow and hazardous par 5 (7) and a dramatic downhill par 3 with a huge green that will make you think you're in the mountains. With sizeable gaps between tees, there are several combo sets with the senior and forward tees both a good bit shorter than originally. A lot of course from the tips. A lot of fun from the remaining tees, but with ample challenge.

Brookfield Country Club (Private)

100 Willow Run, Roswell; 770-993-9230; www.brookfieldcountryclub.com

STAFF: Bill Houck is the General Manager; Michael Parrott is the PGA Director of Instruction.

PAR/YARDAGE: Brookfield Country Club is a par 72 with five sets of tees: Gold (6,801 yards); Blue (6,354); White (5,818); Green (5,196) and Silver (4,998).

COURSE RATING/SLOPE: 72.1/138 (Gold); 70.8/133 (Blue); 68.6/128 (White); 70.3/125 (Green); 69.3/123 (Silver).

ABOUT THE COURSE: Another Mike Riley renovation of an original Joe Lee design, but not as much of a change from tee to green as at Rivermont. Other than a handful of holes, mainly the 1st and 18th, Riley did not change the tee-to-green nature of Brookfield a great deal, but the bunkering and greens complexes are significantly different from those that Lee designed. The course is still relatively short, with the main exception the tour-length par-4 17th. Like Rivermont, Brookfield is on the tight side off the tee, with plenty of problems from start to finish for those who fight a hook, especially on the front nine. Although some of the landing areas have been softened, Brookfield retains some of the most rolling fairways around, and misses in the wrong spots will result in awkward recovery shots. Keep it in the fairway off the tee and Brookfield is not an overly demanding test, although Riley's re-worked greens complexes have given the course a good deal more bite, with enlarged, deepened bunkers and greens that have added a decent amount of slope. There is a considerable stylistic difference in the two nines, with the front a par 35 with only one par 5 and the biggest concern OB stakes down the left side on six holes. The downhill, dogleg left second features one of the oddest and most difficult second shots you'll face, although big hitters can take much of the danger out if play. The shorter but more penal seventh is the other danger hole going out, with a precise lay-up required to avoid trouble off both sides and a lengthy second shot having to clear water to reach a rolling, tough-to-hit green. The back nine begins with a short, inviting par 4 that will test your wedge skill, but there isn't another breather until the short and bunker-laden par-5 18th. In between are plenty of hazards, most notably on a pair of perilous par 5s, a daunting mid-range par 4 (12) with an approach shot that rivals the second, and a water-lined par 3 that does not offer much bailout room (15).



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