

NEWS

FROM: Florida State Golf Association
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May 29, 1981

WEST PALM BEACH--Only one former champion will tee-up for Florida State Golf Association's 64th renewal of the State Amateur Championship here at The President Country Club June 4-7, but a bright array of young players are in the hunt for the blue ribbon title in the four day, 72 hole stroke play event.

Bob Rankin, a Clearwater insurance executive who won at Longboat Key in 1969, always is a contender as is Al Johns, the veteran Punta Gorda real estate developer. Four years ago at Bay Hill, Johns broke Arnold Palmer's course record during the State Amateur when he opened with a first round, nine under 63, crafted smoothly from nine birdies and nine pars.

Last year's winner, Rick Pearson of Bradenton, now is a professional. Pearson also won in 1978 when the event was last hosted here by Perini Development's John Linstroth and his very capable club staff. Pearson's two victories were sub-par performances--a five under 283, here three years ago, and a spectacular 14 under par at Feather Sound in Clearwater last year. The strength of this year's field almost assures that it will take under par numbers for victory.

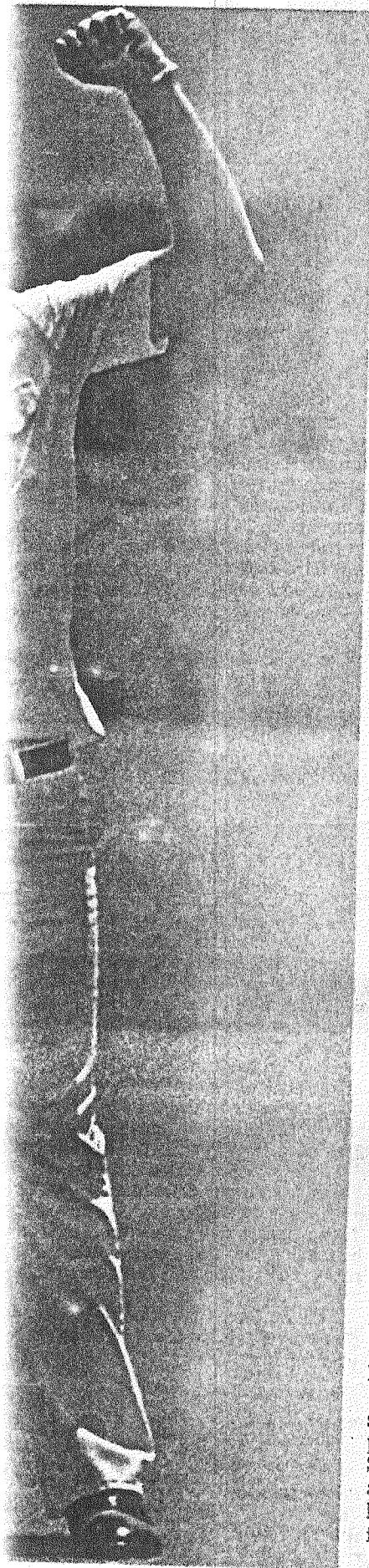
Bob Michael, Sarasota, leads a contingent of strong, young swingers seeking the title. Michael finished fourth in the State Am last year with a 6 under 282. He's a four-time National Lefty Champion and recently won FSGA's Gillespie Memorial Tournament to earn one of the two places on the Florida team which will compete in the Eastern Airlines Tournament of the Americas at Doral, July 1 to 4.

Lee Rinker, Stuart, and Mike Domalske, Sarasota, tied for fifth at 286, in 1980, and along with Phil Wagoner, Bradenton, and Brian Hawke, Tampa, knotted in ninth place at 288, are a formidable foursome, any one of which can take it all.

Jay Schrader, North Palm Beach, FSGA's 1979 State Junior Champion, and Adam Armagost, also NPB, will be serious threats. Tim Fieldhouse, Sarasota, the 1979 State 12-14 Champion, also has come on as a fine player.

Others up from the juniors now enjoying collegiate status are: John Strauss, Winter Springs; Bill Byrne, Oviedo; Jack Nicklaus II, NPB and Scott Behl, Lakeland. Jim Arnold III, Green Cove Springs; Austin Jones, Orlando; David Snyder, Winter Haven; Burwell Jones, Sarasota; Skip Smith, Orlando and Mike Estridge, Lakeland are stout FSGA competitors who will be in the chase.

State Amateur '81 will be a big one!



Times photo by Steve Crowley

for champ David Pesacov

"I almost never missed a fairway all week, and that was the key to winning the tournament. Only twice in four rounds did I not have a shot to the green, when I was in the woods at the third and 18th holes Saturday. As bad as I hit my irons, that driver had to be the difference."

David Pesacov

Pesacov drives to golf crown

By Larry Bush
Times Sports Columnist

With a lot of help from his friends, David Pesacov has become the Florida Amateur golf champion.

A parttime employee of the President Country Club for the past three years, in the cart barn and bag storage areas, he had the full support of the home folks, from John Linstroth, president of Perini Land and Development Corp., to the greenskeepers.

And a former high school teammate, Mark Calcavecchia, was there virtually every step of the way during the final round Sunday, giving Pesacov encour-

State Amateur golf results, C6.

agement at appropriate times or checking to see how the challengers up ahead were doing.

But most of all, said Pesacov, after he had earned a two-stroke margin of victory over some former junior golf compatriots, it was a driver he had been given for Christmas by Don Kepler, a local club repairman.

"I almost never missed a fairway all week, and that was the key to winning the tournament," Pesacov said. "Only twice in four rounds did I not have a shot to the green, when I was in the woods at the third and 18th holes Saturday.

"As bad as I hit my irons, that driver had to be the difference."

A man-mountain of a 20-year-old, seemingly larger than 6-foot-3 and 195 pounds, Pesacov subdued the 7,000-yard South course with a two-under-par 70 and turned back numerous threats with his 72-hole total of 285, three under par for the distance.

It was two strokes higher than the score Rick Pearson won the same title with on the same golf course three years ago.

Tied for second at 287 were Steve Hart of Tequesta and Lee Rinker of Stuart. Hart, the second round leader, came back from Saturday's disastrous 78 with a 67 Sunday, the best score of the tournament. Rinker closed with 68-70 and got to within one stroke of Pesacov with three birdies on the first five holes of the back nine.

Walter Cerrato came out of the pack with a 68 Sunday and took fourth at 289, while left-hander Bob Michael fired and fell back to 70-290. Playing just in front of Pesacov, who was in the last group, Michael birdied the first two holes Sunday, made the turn in four-under 32, then put his second shot in the water at 14 and never recovered.

Pesacov had trailed by two strokes after the first round and by one after 36. But he caught Hart with a birdie-blitz on the back nine, their first, Saturday, pulling even at No. 13 and going ahead for the first time two holes later.

And when Sunday's final round began, Dave led by two over the field.

Only Michael appeared able to put pressure on Pesacov on the front nine. After Michael had taken the challenge at the start, they matched birdies at the sixth, Pesacov birdied the short seventh and Michael got one more with a 10 footer at the eighth. But that was as close as the Sarasota southpaw got ... three strokes.

"I threw a lot of shots away this weekend," Michael said. "I had one out of bounds and one in the water both Thursday and Friday, and another one in the water today. I just got too far behind early. The three-putt greens didn't really matter."

"I heard he had 32 on the front, but I was two under and I was aiming to shoot 69," Pesacov said later. "That meant he would have to have a 64 to tie me, so I wasn't too worried."

See PESACOV / C4

Borg wins
open title



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championship at the President Country Club.

Calcavecchia will have plenty of opportunity to swing a club this week. He was to leave this morning for the finals of the PGA Tour's Spring Qualifying School at Walt Disney World.

The 72-hole tournament is scheduled Wednesday through Saturday on the Palms course, adjacent to the Magnolia course where Calcavecchia and others passed a regional test 10 days ago.

Calcavecchia and Pesacov were teammates at North Shore High School, both graduating in 1978. Mark won the state high school medal as a junior and later added the Junior Orange Bowl title, preceding by a couple of years the same championship earned in December by another North Shore High golfer, Adam Armagost.

Calcavecchia, who walked the full 18 holes with Pesacov Sunday, earned \$8,768 in five series on the Space Coast

in 1978, and again last June at Feather Sound in Clearwater, lost in a playoff. According to Calcavecchia, there were six players after the last five spots. Pearson bogied the first extra hole and was quickly eliminated.

Calcavecchia finished third to Pearson and Peoples at Feather Sound in a final-round duel among three University of Florida golfers.

The field at DWJ this week also included the regional qualifying medalist, Larry Rinker of Stuart, whose brother Lee tied for second behind Pesacov Sunday, and James Weeden, an assistant pro at the Boca Del Mar Country Club in Boca Raton. Also in the lineups will be two former Palm Beach Junior College players, Wally Kuchar of Edgewater and Ken Green, Marbledale, Conn.

The original field of tour hopefuls numbered 556. Five regionals cut this to 150. Cards will be issued Saturday to the low 25 and ties. The final field

was to join Bob Michael of Sarasota, winner of the Gillespie Memorial tournament in March, as the Florida State Golf Association team picked to play for Uncle Sam. Pesacov had already entered in the Rice Planters tournament in Charleston, S.C., that weekend. Twenty-one countries will be represented in the four-day event designed to promote tourism in Miami. The winner will be invited to play in the Doral Eastern Open next February.

Does Jack Sanford know his golf course? At a press briefing Wednesday, Sanford, the director of golf at the President, said the South course was playing at least two shots tougher now than it did three years ago when Rick Pearson won the State Amateur, because the trees had grown up, eliminating shortcuts on several holes, and condominium development had tightened other fairways. Pearson won with 283. And Sunday, Dave Pesacov's

Pesacov secures Amateur

From / G1

Now it was Rinker's turn with a two-shot swing at the 11th after he had fallen five behind with 36 on the front and Pesacov's birdie after an outstanding chip shot at the long 10th hole. Pesacov birdied the 12th, Rinker the short 13th, and then Rinker picked up two more strokes at the 14th when he birdied and Pesacov bogied, cutting the margin to one.

"Sure, I was a little worried after 14, especially after I missed that little putt," Pesacov admitted. "But at the 15th, I hit the best putt I ever hit, a 15 footer. I knew it was in as soon as I hit it."

Rinker was slightly inside Pesacov on the 15th green, and when Dave's putt dropped, the hole suddenly shrunk, but Lee made a good run at it, the ball stopping just an inch or two short, but dead on line.

It was all over, however, when Rinker hit his tee shot into the trees off the 16th tee, eventually making bogey, so therefore Pesacov's bogey at the short but difficult 17th didn't much matter, as long as he didn't blow it at the 18th.

"I hit a perfect drive there," he said later. "Out of bounds? It never entered my mind. That's the kind of confidence that driver has given me."

"Mr. Kepler knows my game so well, that driver is just perfect for me. It has a solid persimmon head. I loved it the first time I picked it up."

"He (Pesacov) got it up and down from everywhere," Rinker said later in testimony to his conquerer. "I'm not

that good of a wedge player. If I had been some of the places he was today, I would have shot 80."

Hart had finished two groups in front of Pesacov and it took a while for the word on his score to drift back. And when Steve saw Pesacov bogey the 17th, he wanted his putt back on the same green.

"It rimmed and hung on the edge," Hart said. "I birdied the 16th and the 18th. If I would have made that one, it might have made Dave play the 18th a little."

Not so, said Pesacov, as he had indicated earlier.

"I felt so comfortable out there all day ... all week," Pesacov added. "Everything is so familiar and I know how to read these greens. Even those little ones I missed (at Nos. 14 and 17), they can mess up your mind if you let them, but I didn't. I felt in control most of the day."

A walk-on at the University of North Carolina this spring after brief tenure at both Florida State University and Palm Beach Junior College, Pesacov hopes to get the attention of Tar Heel Coach Devon Browse with Sunday's win.

"No, I wasn't on scholarship," he said. "Maybe this will help."

Pesacov defends his Palm Beach County Amateur title this weekend at Palm Beach Polo and Country Club, later will play in the Rice Planters and Southern Amateur tournaments as well as the Florida Open.

"But I just think I'll take tomorrow off and get some rest," he said.

"I've told the (FSGA) board of directors I want out. It's been long enough. Let some younger person take over. I've just lost my enthusiasm for the job."

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