



# Refram wins state junior golf

By MARK NEWMAN  
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Scott Brown had been in the clubhouse Sunday afternoon at Frenchman's Creek in North Palm Beach, signing a scorecard that proved he was atop the field in the final round of the Florida State Junior Golf Championships. As he walked toward the 18th green to observe the fate of his co-leader, Dean Refram, Brown heard an ominous noise.

"I heard a ball hit a tree, and I said, 'uh-oh,'" said Brown, a 15-year-old from Lakeland. "I had a feeling it might be Dean."

Unfortunately for Brown, it was Refram, a 17-year-old from the Tampa area and the son of former PGA Tour member Dean Refram Sr., had just launched his third shot on the par-five 18th. The ball headed for a veritable forest on the right side of the green, but it struck a tall pine and ricocheted onto the fringe.

Refram saved par to force a sudden-death playoff, and he proceeded to an easy one-hole victory.

"You make your own breaks," said Refram, who duplicated his first-round 72 to finish four-over-par in the 36-hole tournament. "They even out."

Ponte Vedra's Len Mattiace, who shot a blistering 68 Saturday for the first-round lead, had a nightmare finish on the

6,498-yard course. He parred the first hole, bogeyed the second and third, and carded a 10 on the par-four fourth. Mattiace wound up with a 79 and a 147 total, tying Boca Raton's J.J. Sehlke, who had a 76 Sunday. Tamarac's Michael Sposa was the top South Florida finisher with a 74-72—146.

Frenchman's Creek may be home to 15-year-old Gary Nicklaus of North Palm Beach, but it offered him no advantage Sunday. As his father, Jack, looked on, Nicklaus triple-bogeyed No. 1 en route to an 82 and 155 total.

For Refram, who won last week at the Lehigh Acres Invitational and roomed there with Brown, the 100-yard tree shot on 18 was truly a stroke of luck. He had come to Frenchman's without his nine-iron, which was broken last week, and choked up on an eight-iron for that shot.

The trees weren't as kind to Brown. His second shot on the playoff hole went wide left, and palmetto leaves rendered a shot at the green impossible. Brown was forced to chip sideways onto the fairway, while Refram had no difficulty reaching the green on his third shot. Refram two-putted for the triumph.

"It makes it harder to win a playoff when you're good friends with the guy," Refram said. "It's a lot easier when you hate the guy. Scott will be around again.

This has happened to me plenty of times."

Refram, who will be a senior this fall at Tampa Prep, phoned his father with the news and then drove home. Just four years ago, he was caddying for his father, who now designs courses.

The younger Refram had a reprieve of sorts when the clouds emptied at 2:30. Refram, who shot a fine two-under 33 on the front nine, was standing on the 16th tee after bogeying three of the previous four holes. The rain forced golfers into the clubhouse area, where Refram sat next to Brown.

"I need this to get my mental outlook straight again," Refram said during the wait. "When you get rollin' on the front side, it's hard to change. Once you step on the 10th tee, it's a whole different game. Attitudes change. People start to try to make par, and it's a mental letdown."

- Final results  
144 — Dean Refram (72-72), Scott Brown (74-70).  
146 — Miles McConnell (70-76), Michael Sposa (72-72).  
147 — Len Mattiace (68-79), J.J. Sehlke (71-76).  
148 — David Bishop (76-72), Glen Miciotta (75-73), John Tighe (70-78).  
149 — Scott Curry (75-74), Christian Dimarco (79-70), John Pochis (75-74), Johnny Secunda (79-70), Tim Shifflet (75-74).  
150 — Bruce Sinclair (77-73), Michael Valley (74-76).  
151 — Larry Martineau (78-73), Hiroshi Matsuo (78-73), Shannon O'Neil (77-74), Steve O'Neil (74-77).  
152 — Scott Ford (76-76), Jimmy Gilleon (77-75), Gar Griffith (79-73), Eric Prigge (74-78).  
153 — Anthony Ballestero (77-76), Buster Chapman (80-73), Mickie Gallagher (77-76), Edward Macon (76-77), Anthony Mandatta (74-79), Philip Pitts (75-78), Tomm Tolles (79-74).