

DAVID SMITH

1986 MID-AMATEUR CHAMPION

David Smith qualified for the PGA Tour in the same class that included Andy Bean and Gary Koch.

After investing a couple of years in the pursuit of birdies, he departed the uncertain world of golf for the equally uncertain world of investment.

"I've been in the investment business since 1977," said Smith, who regained his amateur status in the fall of 1985. "I have to say I've done better here than I did at golf."

In the Florida State Mid-Amateur Championship, though, he made his presence well-known to the state's top 25-and-over golfers.

Smith, 36, qualified with a 36-hole total of 141 at LaGorce Country Club in Miami Beach. Only Bill McDonough of West Palm Beach, who shot 140, was lower.

In match play, Smith ended four straight matches on the 17th green. In the final, he defeated Keith Keister of Winter Park by a 2-and-1 margin.

"Basically, I play Saturday mornings," said the Orlando resident. "You can't expect much that way. If you're just getting up from behind your desk to play golf, you're in trouble. It's silly to think that you could compete successfully with people who play a lot."

Regardless, Smith marched through the medal-match format of the Florida Mid-Amateur.

"I was lucky because the course was suited to my game," he said. "It's the kind of course where I can hit a lot of drivers. I would be associated more with long than with accurate."

Smith felt positive after shooting a 31 on the back nine during a practice round, and it was the back nine that saved him all week.

"In most cases, I was 2-down, 1-down or even at best after the front



nine," he said. "If there was any turning point, it was my ability to effectively negotiate the back nine."

"I was 2-down for a long time in the final match, but I wound up birdying 16 and 17 to end it."

"I was anywhere from 2-under to 4-under on the back nine in most of my matches. I really felt comfortable out there."

Smith, who finished fourth in the Florida State Amateur Championship, says he would like to play more golf in 1987.

"I really don't know if I can, but I would like to compete on a national level," he said. "That's all contingent on finding time to practice and not embarrassing myself."

Embarrass himself with a fourth place finish in the State Amateur and a victory in the State Mid-Amateur? You've got to be kidding.

Smith may be the world's best Saturday golfer.

"Well," he added. "You just have to realize that when you show up to play, you don't always have your best game with you. But what you can get out of what you've got is what it's all about."

In the Mid-Am, Smith got plenty. In addition to Keister, his victims were Jim Levix of Boca Raton, Bobby Grace of St. Petersburg and Frank Strafacci Jr. of Miami.

Former champion Bob Kouwe of Tampa lost to Strafacci in the first round of match play.