

COUCH LAPS THE FIELD AT STATE AMATEUR

The final round of the State Amateur Championship began with a leader and the rest of the field, as eight strokes separated Chris Couch of North Lauderdale from his nearest competitor. The Florida State Golf Association conducted event saw the University of Florida junior fire scores only common at the professional ranks through 54 holes. Many seemingly insurmountable leads though have fallen to complacent play.

Not so during this 20-year-old's final 18 holes. Couch started out by birdieing two of the first three holes to extend his lead to 11 strokes as his nearest competitor, Keith Rick of Boca Raton, bogeyed No. 1. The next five holes Couch just kept hitting fairways and hitting greens-in-regulation for pars. On the 431-yard ninth hole Couch sank a 40-foot birdie putt to make the turn at three-under-par 33.

On the back nine Couch's short game was tested as he made bogey on No. 11, failing to get up-and-down. After routine pars on Nos. 12 and 13, Couch's short game on Nos. 14 and 15 would allowed him to save par.

Just as during Saturday's round, Couch would hit 481-yard par-5 16th in two, this time just missing his eagle putt and settling for a birdie 4. On the par-3 17th Couch hit the green but, three-putted for a bogey 4. The par-4 18th now was the only thing standing between the North Lauderdale resident and the 1993 title. After a drive which barely found the left rough, Couch would hit his approach shot to within 6 feet. His birdie effort nearly went in as Couch had to settle for a par 4 and final round 70. The 12-under-par 276 total posted by Chris Couch was nothing short of spectacular.

Overshadowed by Couch's performance was the fine play of fellow-Gator Daniel Stone of St. Petersburg and Ohio State University team member Jimmy Bell of Orlando at 2-over-par 290. Just three strokes behind Stone and Bell was Isleworth Country Club member George Roat. In a three way tie for fourth were Keith Rick and Rick Heard of Boca Raton and comeback-story-of-the-week Mike Freeman of Riverview, all at 294. Freeman opened with an 82 on Thursday, then played the last 54 holes 4-under-par.

The Florida State Golf Association's next event will be the State Four-Ball Championship scheduled for July 31-August at TPC-Sawgrass. For more information on the State Amateur or other FSGA events please call at 813/921-5695.

COUCH TAKES COMMANDING LEAD AT STATE AMATEUR

Through 54 holes of the State Amateur Championship, Chris Couch of North Lauderdale has set a torrid pace. Eight strokes separate the soon-to-be-junior at the University of Florida and his nearest competitor. With just 18 holes to go at the Florida State Golf Association event, Couch may set a tournament record.

Length certainly is not a problem for this 20-year-old as he has hit all four par-5s in two over the past two days; holes 4 and 12 on Friday and holes 6 and 16 on Saturday. Couch hit the 533-yard sixth hole in two with driver-3-iron. Two putts later he settled for a birdie four. On the 481-yard 16th Couch hit driver-5-iron to within 18 feet. There would finally be redemption on 16 as Couch made the 18-footer for eagle three.

With such length usually comes its share of errant shots. Not the case for Couch, as he hit 16 greens. "I am hitting it as well as I did at Nationals (NCAA Championship). I am just scoring better," commented Couch. "Everything is working well in all phases of my game."

Second round co-leader Keith Rick of Boca Raton posted a 4-over-par 76 on Saturday. The Florida State University senior's round lost eight strokes to Couch's 4-under-par effort. In third place is George Roat of Orlando at 217. One stroke behind Roat in fourth place is Couch's teammate at the University of Florida, Daniel Stone of St. Petersburg.

Three players are tied for fifth place at 220: Rick Heard of Boca Raton, Peter Williams of Orlando, and Chris Colli of Brandon. Colli's third round 70 included birdies on five of his last seven holes. Low round of the day, however, belonged to Mike Freeman of Riverview with a 5-under-par 67 for a 224 total.

Tomorrow's final round will start at 8 a.m., with the leaders teeing off at 9:50 a.m. The public is welcomed and admission is free.

GATOR AND 'NOLE SHARE STATE AMATEUR LEAD

It was cut-day for the 120 competitors at the State Amateur Championship. University of Florida team member Chris Couch and Florida State University team member Keith Rick grabbed a share of the second round lead. Near perfect conditions allowed Couch of North Lauderdale and Rick of Boca Raton to rise to the challenge with identical five-under-par 67s to go with opening round 71s at the famed Bay Hill Club.

Just a couple of weeks ago Couch led the University of Florida to the 1993 NCAA championship with a clinching putt on the 18th hole. Yesterday, Couch not only made a clutch putt on 18 but, also on 3, 4, 10, 12, and 17 all for birdie. His only bogey of the day came on the par-3 second where he three-putted from off the green. When you hit 17 greens, as the North Lauderdale resident did, six birdies are within reach. "I am hittin' it good right now," mentioned Couch. "Hope it keeps up all week."

Co-leader Keith Rick got hot early birdieing the first four holes on Friday. "Everything went my way today. I thought I was going deeper than 67," said the fifth-year senior, who worked on his game until 8 p.m. on Thursday. Rick felt he scrambled during Thursday's 71.

John Corzilius of Nokomis and Tim Iley of Palm Beach Gardens are five strokes off the pace at 143. A total of 16 competitors are within 10 strokes of the lead going into the final 36 holes.

The third round of play gets under way tomorrow at 8 a.m. The public is welcomed and admission is free.

SCORES AFTER ROUND 4

1	Chris Couch	North Lauderdale	71 - 67 - 68 - 70 -	276
2	Daniel Stone	St Petersburg	73 - 72 - 73 - 72 -	290
2	Jimmy Bell	Orlando	75 - 73 - 73 - 69 -	290
4	George Roat	Orlando	75 - 69 - 73 - 76 -	293
5	Mike Freeman	Riverview	82 - 75 - 67 - 70 -	294
5	Rick Heard	Boca Raton	71 - 77 - 72 - 74 -	294
5	Keith Rick	Boca Raton	71 - 67 - 76 - 80 -	294
8	Trey Sones	Orlando	76 - 76 - 70 - 73 -	295
8	Chris Colli	Brandon	75 - 74 - 71 - 75 -	295
8	Peter Williams	Orlando	73 - 73 - 74 - 75 -	295
8	D J Holland	Tampa	75 - 71 - 75 - 74 -	295
12	Doug LaCrosse	Orlando	77 - 73 - 72 - 74 -	296
13	Jamie Burns	Gainesville	70 - 77 - 74 - 76 -	297
13	W K Himelsbaugh	Clearwater	75 - 75 - 75 - 72 -	297
13	Steve Riviere	Apopka	71 - 76 - 75 - 75 -	297
16	David Boesel	Winter Park	73 - 75 - 73 - 77 -	298
16	Patrick Chisholm	Valrico	79 - 74 - 74 - 71 -	298
18	Sam Lewis	Tampa	77 - 74 - 75 - 74 -	300
18	John Corzilius	Nokomis	72 - 71 - 79 - 78 -	300
20	Scott VanDame	Palm Harbor	72 - 77 - 78 - 74 -	301
20	Tim Iley	Palm Beach Gardens	72 - 71 - 79 - 79 -	301
22	Rick Cloninger	Orlando	74 - 74 - 75 - 79 -	302
22	Denny Tymosko	Miami Lakes	76 - 76 - 78 - 72 -	302
24	Josh Skivington	Wellington	75 - 76 - 74 - 78 -	303
24	Bob Stockman	Lake Mary	75 - 77 - 76 - 75 -	303
24	Paul Smith	Naples	77 - 72 - 78 - 76 -	303
24	Gary Keymont	Orlando	75 - 74 - 78 - 76 -	303
24	Chris Howell	Winter Garden	75 - 74 - 79 - 75 -	303
29	Dennis Deja	Largo	75 - 76 - 74 - 79 -	304
29	David Yarmitzky	Plantation	78 - 76 - 74 - 76 -	304
29	A J Kroeger	Apopka	75 - 76 - 77 - 76 -	304
32	Scott Smith	Orlando	77 - 77 - 74 - 77 -	305
32	Joe Tringali	Palatka	70 - 79 - 75 - 81 -	305
32	Brad Lanning	Sarasota	76 - 76 - 78 - 75 -	305
32	Ron Ferguson	Orlando	73 - 74 - 79 - 79 -	305
32	Chad Harris	West Palm Beach	74 - 74 - 80 - 77 -	305
37	James Baker, III	North Palm Beach	80 - 74 - 70 - 82 -	306
37	Will McClave	Gainesville	75 - 76 - 83 - 72 -	306
39	Paul Melson	Plantation	75 - 76 - 75 - 81 -	307
39	Denny Allen	Pine Ridge	79 - 76 - 76 - 76 -	307
41	Wyatt Meyer	Tampa	76 - 76 - 73 - 83 -	308
41	Blane Brown	Brooksville	77 - 72 - 82 - 77 -	308
43	Don Whittemore	Temple Terrace	77 - 80 - 73 - 79 -	309
43	Richard Kerper	Clearwater	78 - 76 - 74 - 81 -	309
43	Van Champion	Tallahassee	72 - 73 - 79 - 85 -	309
43	Brian Platock	Neptune Beach	74 - 75 - 79 - 81 -	309
47	Troy Wheat	Boynton Beach	74 - 78 - 79 - 79 -	310
47	Greg Carpousis	Maitland	77 - 78 - 79 - 76 -	310
49	Vinny Graffeo	Boca Raton	78 - 70 - 79 - 84 -	311
49	Steve Sponder	Pembroke Pines	76 - 77 - 81 - 77 -	311
51	James Staub	Gainesville	81 - 75 - 76 - 80 -	312
51	Jason Long	Palm Beach Gardens	77 - 80 - 77 - 78 -	312
51	Bruce Fitzpatrick	Miami	76 - 80 - 78 - 78 -	312
51	Bradley Ball	Wellington	73 - 81 - 79 - 79 -	312
55	Mike Ellison	Jacksonville	74 - 80 - 71 - 88 -	313
55	Sandy Davison	Ponte Vedra Beach	79 - 76 - 75 - 83 -	313
55	Stephen Saterbo	Winter Haven	73 - 83 - 75 - 82 -	313
55	A B Sisco	Pensacola	77 - 75 - 79 - 82 -	313
55	Paul Kintz	West Palm Beach	80 - 76 - 80 - 77 -	313
55	Bill Lovett	Naples	78 - 74 - 81 - 80 -	313
61	Mark Petzold	Gainesville	77 - 78 - 79 - 80 -	314
61	Vince Cherrix	Delray Beach	80 - 74 - 81 - 79 -	314
63	David McDowell	Palm Harbor	80 - 76 - 77 - 82 -	315
63	Kerry Schwencke	Boca Raton	77 - 76 - 78 - 84 -	315
63	David Sutton	Maitland	76 - 79 - 78 - 82 -	315
63	Peter Wicknertz	West Palm Beach	78 - 78 - 82 - 77 -	315
63	Brian Spencer	Ft Pierce	74 - 80 - 82 - 79 -	315
68	John Brooks	Ponte Vedra	78 - 79 - 75 - 84 -	316
69	Ryan Dillon	Winter Garden	81 - 74 - 78 - 84 -	317
70	Phil Leckev	St Petersburg	79 - 78 - 81 - 84 -	322