

# Carrington takes slim lead into final round

CONTINUED FROM 1D

rounds on the day. Carrington, a former Forest standout and a senior golfer at Florida State University, has a three-round total of 1-under-par 212 heading into today's final round. He is one shot ahead of Owen, who shot 73, and University of Central Florida player Jason Opal, who carded a 71. Dave Gardner and Oshima are four shots off the pace at 216.

"It was crazy today," Carrington said. "I don't know ... I'm honestly stepping up to the ball and not knowing where it's going. I hit the ball well today. I really got into a rhythm on about the sixth hole."

Just one hole earlier, on No. 5, Carrington took a double bogey. But from that point until the time he stepped up to the tee at the 16th hole, the two-time winner of the Henry N. Camp Invitational, played flawlessly. After shooting a 1-under-par 35 on the front side, Carrington birdied No. 10 and No. 13. He then eagled the par-five 14th hole and followed that up with another birdie on 15 to get to 6-under on the day and 4-under for the tournament.

But on the tee at the menacing 16th hole, which is lined entirely by a deep quarry, Carrington got a little quick with his drive and hooked it into the rocks. He finished the hole with a triple bogey, all but killing what had been a

fantastic round. Carrington then took pars on both 17 and 18 to finish with what was still the day's best round.

"I'm very happy," Carrington said. "I walked off 16 and I was still 3-under (for the day). I was telling (playing partner) Blane Brown, 'there's no reason to get mad.' I just tried to blow it off. That will be the only time a triple-bogey doesn't bother me. I'm ecstatic ... I'm so happy to be playing good again."

For most of his round Saturday, Owen also played pretty well. Heading into the 16th hole Owen stood at 2-under for the day and 4-under for the tournament. But after hitting an absolutely perfect tee shot, the hole that has become his nemesis this entire week, nabbed him again with a costly three-putt for bogey.

Still, heading into the 18th hole, Owen stood at 3-under par for the tournament and appeared poised to take the lead into the final round. But a tee shot into a bunker was the beginning of what would turn into a disastrous triple-bogey 7 on the par-four finishing hole. Through three rounds, Owen is now an amazing 10-over par on holes 16-18 and 10-under par on every other hole.

"The last three holes have really hurt," Owen said. "I've got to be the leader in triple bogeys. I started the day one out (of the lead) and I made a triple bogey and I'm still one out. I'm excited about tomorrow."

# Carrington, Owen hold top two spots in State Am

By KEITH NIEBUHR  
SPORTS WRITER

LECANTO — It was bound to happen sooner or later.

Black Diamond Ranch had just been too receptive, too kind to Daisuke Oshima and Ocala's Daniel Owen

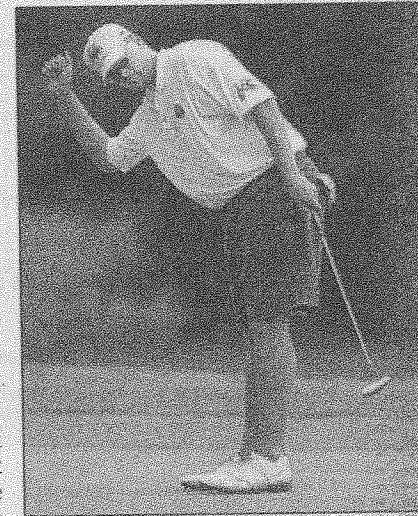
— the leader and second-place man, respectively, — during the first two rounds of the 78th Florida State Amateur. That the course would have its day was just a formality. Saturday was that day.

On an overcast afternoon, the demanding par-71 layout got even, taking the bite out of Oshima's lead with a 6-over-par 77,

and causing misery to Owen on the final three holes for the third consecutive day. Amid the dust left from those two rounds emerged a new leader, Ocala's Steve Carrington, who was as unlikely a choice to win this championship heading into the tournament as Oshima and Owen had been.

Despite a double bogey on the front nine and a triple-bogey 7 on No. 16, Carrington managed to shoot a 3-under par 68, one of only three sub-par

PLEASE SEE CARRINGTON ON 3D



ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/STAR-BANNER

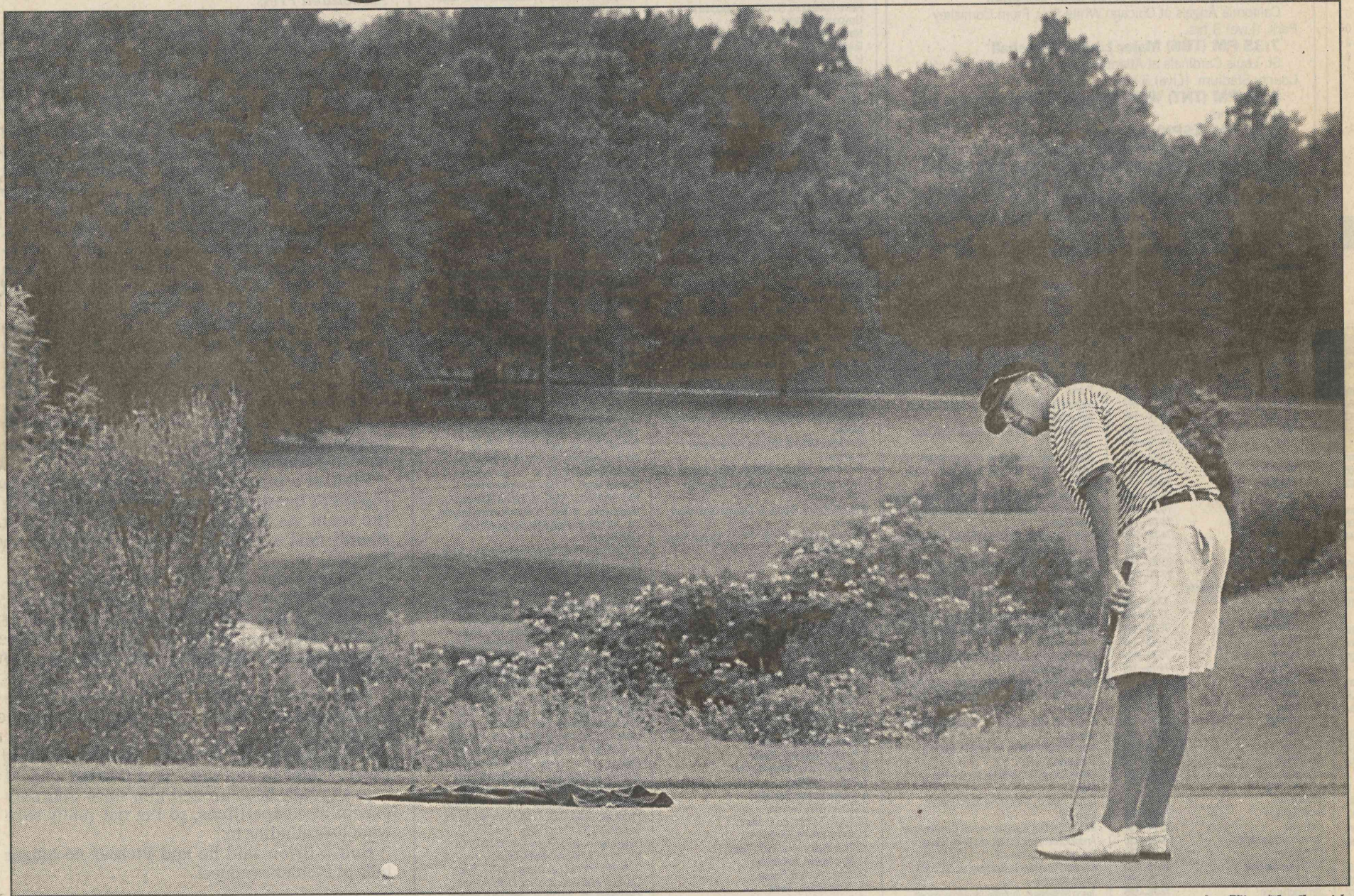
**Former Forest High golfer Steve Carrington has put together two straight sub-par rounds to take a one-shot lead.**

Oshima also had problems on the back nine. After carding a 1-over 37 on the front, he struggled to a 5-over 40 on the back that included a double-bogey 6 on the 14th hole.

But while Oshima was struggling, Opal continued his steady play, shooting an even-par 71. For the third straight day he was able to avoid the high numbers on 16, 17 and 18 that have plagued so many others.

"I'm in contention ... I've put myself in contention," said Opal, who finished third at last year's State Amateur. "I've been hitting it real consistent. When you hit it down the middle, it's hard to get a big number."

# Carrington claims crown



Jana Pittson/The Chronicle

Steve Carrington of Ocala putts at the 16th hole of Black Diamond Ranch during the final round of play of the 1996 Florida State Amateur Golf Championship Sunday. Carrington, a walk-on golfer at FSU, parred the hole and held on to win the tournament.

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# Carrington the champ



ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/STAR-BANNER

Steve Carrington led a 1-2 finish of Ocala players in the State Amateur Championship. Former Ocala Christian Academy player Daniel Owen lost by two shots to Carrington, a former Forest player.

None of this success has come easy for Carrington.

His ride to this new plateau started four years ago when he graduated from Forest and walked-on at Florida State. Now, as he enters his senior year, Carrington is no longer a walk-on and he has a legitimate chance to become the Seminoles' No. 1 player. At FSU, Carrington also carries a solid grade-point average, and in fact, was headed back to Tallahassee Sunday night because he was slated to start summer classes this morning.

"He keeps raising his standards and he keeps improving each year," said Buck Bradley, Carrington's father. "He's gotten good results, either at school or with his game. We made him work when he was in high school and that has helped him appreciate what he has. He's a great young man."

And a pretty good golfer, too.

Sunday, under the immense pressure of the tournament, and on an incredibly tough course, Carrington was at his best. His final-round 70 was enough to peek out a two-shot win in this, the biggest tournament of his life. That he had competed in and twice won the Henry N. Camp Invitational at Ocala Municipal definitely helped, because it exposed him to the pressures of playing in front of onlookers. So too, did the fact that he was playing with Ocalan Daniel Owen and Jason Opal, two players he knows well.

"I've played a lot with both of them so it was easy going," Carrington said.

With the championship his, Carrington has decided to take a week off to rest and to get back into the flow of things at school. Then, he'll be back at the course, readying for the U.S. Amateur, a tournament of even greater magnitude.

"This is definitely the most prestigious thing I've ever won," Carrington said.

Something tells me that may not hold true for long.

# Hard work pays off for Carrington

LECANTO

**O**n an overcast day at Black Diamond Ranch, the sun shined brighter on Ocala's Steve Carrington than ever before.

Against a field comprised of several past winners, a United States Amateur champion, and players from colleges throughout the South, Carrington slugged it out against what is considered one of the toughest golf courses in the state and came away victorious at the 78th Florida State Amateur.

As he walked away from the 18th green on Sunday, he walked over to his parents, gave them each a big hug and headed back to his cart. But before he could get there, he was heard uttering the words, "Do you believe I won this?"

Quite honestly, he couldn't.

Thirty minutes later, after he had signed his scorecard, shook a few dozen hands, and accepted his trophy, Carrington still didn't know what to say, obviously shaken by the moment.

"I was looking at the past champions and I didn't think I was in that class," Carrington said. "It seems like everybody that is anybody has won this. To say that I'm in that class feels pretty good."

That class includes University of Florida coach Buddy Alexander, Jerry Pate, Bob Murphy, Gary Koch and Doug Sanders — a pretty good group of winners by any standards. And now you can add Carrington to that list.

# FSU senior from Ocala fires 2-under 282 for amateur title

By Bill Pickett  
Sports Correspondent

Just about a week ago at this time Steve Carrington slouched his way home from Georgia where he had missed the cut in an amateur tournament.

Sunday afternoon he stood tall as he held high the silver cup awarded the winner of the Florida State Golf Association Amateur Championship.

Carrington fired his third straight sub-par round — a 1-under 70 — at Black Diamond Ranch Country Club to claim the '96 title by two strokes over Daniel Owen of Candler. The No. 3 player at Florida State University, Carrington turned in a 2-under 282 for the championship.

Owen's final-round 71 put him at 284 and Jason Opal of Longwood was another two strokes back at 286 with Orlando's Brandyn Schneider, who fired the day's best round of 67.

"It's an up-and-down game some-

times," the 20-year-old Carrington opined. "I was up in Georgia last week and shot 72-78 and missed the cut. This week I turn around and win here - and believe me, I'd rather do that.

"I'm amazed," he continued.

"This is a tremendous field. It's a great feeling."

Nobody gave it to him. The lush Black Diamond track was stretched to its full 7,159 yards for the final trip of the 72-hole championship. Carrington, a senior and finance major at FSU, recovered from an unspectacular first-day 74 with tours of 70-68-70.

"I've been putting a lot of effort into the game lately," he explained, "and I guess it paid off here. I was looking to

## FLORIDA STATE AMATEUR

**SCORES OF LEADERS** after the final round of the 1996 Florida State Amateur Championship

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Steve Carrington, Ocala | 74-70-68-70—282 |
| Daniel Owen, Candler    | 68-72-73-71—284 |
| Jason Opal, Longwood    | 70-72-71-73—286 |
| Brandyn Schneider, Orl  | 71-74-74-67—286 |

finish in the top 10 so I wouldn't have to go through qualifying for the tournament next year."

He started strongly Sunday with birdies at Nos. 4 and 5, but bogeyed No. 6 and played the seventh at par. He made the turn

leading by a shot over both Owen and Opal. The latter fell back with bogeys at Nos. 12 and 15 and Owen went two back when Carrington reached the 529-yard 14th in two and two-tapped for a birdie 4.

It turned out to be a case of hanging on as the final threesome picked its way around the treacherous trail of "quarry holes."

"I was a little nervous on the 16th tee," Carrington admitted. He had suf-

fered a triple-bogey 7 there Saturday and had played the quarry holes (14 through 18) at 6-over the previous three rounds.

But he parred out, using two putts from 5 feet at the 477-yard, par-4 18th to put his name on the championship trophy.

Owen was satisfied with his runner-up finish in his first outing since being reinstated as an amateur earlier this month. He briefly had tested the professional ranks on the mini-tour trail.

"I can't complain about finishing second," he explained. "These holes got everybody. I was 11-over for the tournament on the quarry holes. I played conservatively today." He had 16 pars, a birdie and a bogey.

He might have been closer if a couple of putts had dropped. He lipped the hole at No. 16 and again from 25 feet at

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## GOLF

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the 17th, which put a crease in Carrington's brow when Owen's second shot at 18 landed some 20 feet left of the flagstick.

"I knew it wasn't over; he almost holed it out at 17. I had to get it on the green," Carrington said of his approach to the finishing hole. He put his 6-iron second shot to within 5 feet from 176 yards to ice the victory.

Schneider, a 19-year-old golfing sophomore at the University of Florida, had no indication his round would get to 4-under.

"I missed the greens on the first three holes," he said, "but I was able to make pars and then I just kept it going."

His biggest shot of the day came at the 401-yard, 11th hole where he flew "a little 6-iron" into the cup from 168 yards for an eagle 2.

"I couldn't pick up any strokes on the last few holes," Scheider said, "but it was a good tournament for me." In his first state amateur a year ago he finished

11th.

Opal's 1-over final round left him in third place for the second straight year.

Rounding out the top 10 and ties were Ben Taylor of Jacksonville (71-288), Daisuke Oshima of Valrico (74-290) and, at 291, Rick Cloninger of Orlando (74), Brian Kassel of Jacksonville (72), UF golf coach and 1991 winner Buddy Alexander (73), 1992 champion Doug LaCrosse of Tampa (70) and Dave Gardner of Altamonte Springs.

# Former Forest High star claims State Amateur title

By KEITH NIEBUHR  
SPORTS WRITER

LECANTO — As the final threesome at Black Diamond Ranch stepped out of their carts and headed toward the 18th green during Sunday's final round of the 78th Florida State Amateur, it was evident which one would be walking off the green as champion.

Ocala's Daniel Owen, the leader after one round, and Jason Opal, who finished third in this event last year, had worn and beaten looks on their respective faces. The other member of the group, Ocala's Steve Carrington, was in a completely different mode. His step still had plenty of kick to it, his face beamed from ear to ear with a huge smile, his lead was two shots, his ball rested just 4 feet from the pin.

Yes, this was Carrington's day.

He had conquered this course, this beastly thing that had caused so many other players to get on their hands and

## THE LEADERS

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Steve Carrington  | 74-70-68-70—282 |
| Daniel Owen       | 68-72-73-71—284 |
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| Jason Opal        | 70-72-71-73—286 |
| Ben Taylor        | 78-65-74-71—288 |

### ■ Complete scores/3C

knees and beg for mercy. He had finished the four-day event at 2-under-par — two shots better than Owen — and in the process captured this prestigious championship, his name now alongside the likes of Jerry Pate and Gary Koch among others. Owen's even-par 71 put him alone in second, while Longwood's Opal shot 73 and finished tied for third with Brandyn Schneider of Orlando, who shot a final-round 67.

"I just wanted to finish in the top 10  
PLEASE SEE CARRINGTON ON 3C



ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/STAR-BANNER

Daniel Owen shot 71 Sunday.

# Carrington hangs on for State Am title

CONTINUED FROM 1C

"I automatically qualify for next year," said Carrington, a former West High star and current Florida State University player. "I really didn't want to go out and play well."

And play well he did. After shooting a 3-under-par 68 Saturday to take a one-shot lead over Owen and Opal heading into today's final round, Carrington started quickly, making a birdie on the opening hole. From there, things got rather interesting and during the next eight holes he made three more birdies, but also hit four bogeys to shoot an erratic even-par 36 on the front side.

Meanwhile, Owen and Opal hung around with steady play, though neither was really able to catch fire. As the group headed to the par-5 14th hole, Carrington went to a one-shot lead over Owen and Opal two shots back at 1-over the tournament. A gutsy tee shot over the quarry that was within 5-10 feet of not making it to play left Carrington with an angle to the green, which he calmly worked to its right side.

Carrington's 2-putt for birdie put him at 2-under. Opal also birdied the hole to get to even while Owen failed to get up and down from just the green and had to settle for par. But still, with three menacing parry holes and the dangerous hole to play, Carrington took nothing for granted, even after hitting his second shot on No. 15 to within 12 feet of the hole. He couldn't, especially after Owen knocked in a footer for birdie that moved him 1-under, one shot behind Carrington. Opal bogeyed the hole in a greenside bunker to fall

"I didn't think I had it in me."

Steve Carrington

three behind.

"I really thought I'd make it," Carrington said of his putt on 15. "It just died off at the end. I wanted to be on the tee first on 16 and put one in the fairway to put some pressure on Daniel. But instead, he made his birdie and then put one down the middle and put it on me."

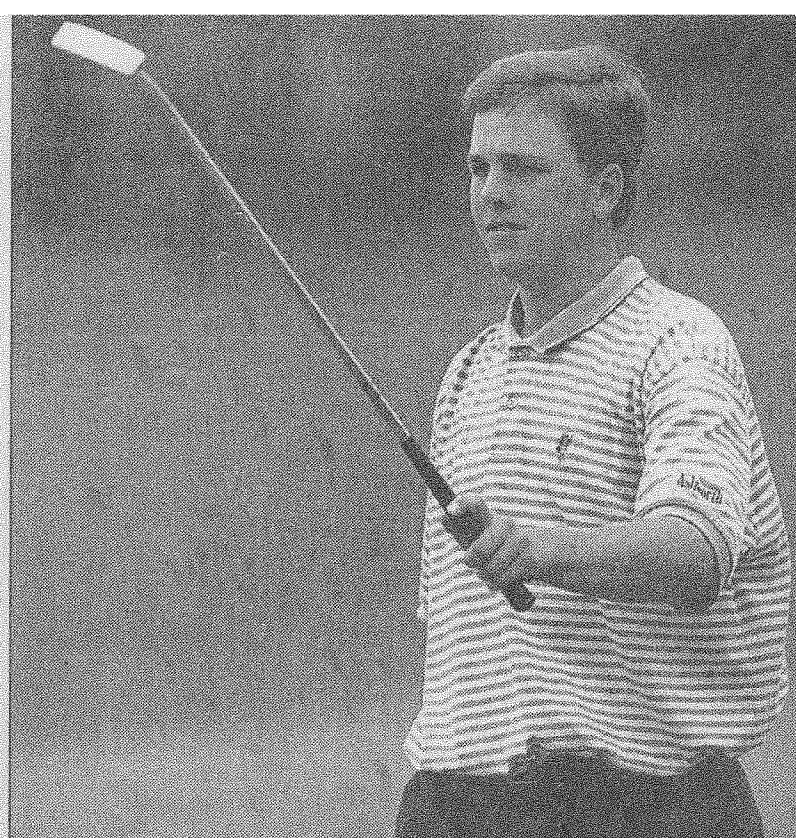
At that point, it hardly mattered.

Carrington was in a rhythm and he calmly placed his drive on the left side of the fairway. Just a day earlier, he had found the quarry with his tee shot. Owen was first to hit from the fairway, but his ball tailed to the right and found the rough, just a few feet from green, but several feet from the pin.

"I wasn't going for the pin," said Owen, who bogeyed the 16th hole Saturday and took a triple there Friday. "I was trying to get it on the right side of the green but it rolled off."

Owen failed to get up and down for par, again falling two shots behind Carrington, who narrowly missed his birdie putt from about 12 feet out. Though he would par both 17 and 18, Owen would still finish an incredible 11-over on Black Diamond's three finishing holes for the tourney — incredible because he went 11-under on the rest of the course.

Still, Owen would have his chances. Carrington's tee shot on 17 squirted right of the green while Owen's went to within 12 feet of the hole. But again, Carrington



ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/STAR-BANNER

Third-place finisher Jason Opal reacts to a missed putt Sunday.

came up with the shot, this time placing his pitch 2 feet from the hole. Owen lipped out for birdie and the two headed to 18, separated by just two shots.

"I thought that putt was in," Owen said. "I figured if that went in I might put some pressure on him (Carrington). Those holes (16, 17 and 18) really got me. I feel like they cost me the tournament."

On No. 18, both Carrington and Owen found the fairway, their balls landing within 10 feet of each other. First to hit, Owen pulled his ball slightly and it landed on the left fringe, leaving him with a tough shot at birdie. With the pressure now slightly off, Carrington stuck his ball on the top shelf, just 4 feet from the flagstick.

"I kind of felt like I had it there," Carrington said.

He did. Though Owen 2-putted for par and Carrington missed his birdie effort, the tourney was his, and he won the championship trophy.

In winning, Carrington beat out some impressive company, most notably University of Florida coach Buddy Alexander, who finished nine shots off the pace. Alexander won this event in 1991, the last year it was played at Black Diamond, and also is a United States Amateur Champion. Carrington had had success in previous amateur tournaments — he twice won the Henry N. Camp Invitational — but had never won anything of the magnitude, and in all honesty, the title has come as a huge surprise primarily to himself.

"No, I really didn't (think I would win)," Carrington said. "I didn't think I had it in me."

The 78th annual  
**FLORIDA STATE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP**

Black Diamond Ranch ♦ Lecanto, Florida ♦ June 20 - 23, 1996

**FINAL RESULTS**

|    |                   |                   |    |    |    |    |     |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1  | Steve Carrington  | Ocala             | 74 | 70 | 68 | 70 | 282 |
| 2  | Daniel Owen       | Candler           | 68 | 72 | 73 | 71 | 284 |
| 3  | Jason Opal        | Longwood          | 70 | 72 | 73 | 71 | 286 |
| 3  | Brandyn Schneider | Orlando           | 71 | 74 | 74 | 67 | 286 |
| 5  | Ben Taylor        | Jacksonville      | 78 | 65 | 74 | 71 | 288 |
| 6  | Daisuke Oshima    | Valrico           | 68 | 71 | 77 | 74 | 290 |
| 7  | Rick Cloninger    | Orlando           | 71 | 76 | 70 | 74 | 291 |
| 7  | Brian Kassel      | Jacksonville      | 70 | 77 | 72 | 72 | 291 |
| 7  | Buddy Alexander   | Gainesville       | 73 | 72 | 73 | 73 | 291 |
| 7  | Doug LaCrosse     | Tampa             | 76 | 72 | 73 | 70 | 291 |
| 7  | Dave Gardner      | Altamonte Springs | 69 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 291 |
| 12 | Tim Vola          | North Palm Beach  | 77 | 75 | 69 | 71 | 292 |
| 13 | Boomer Erick      | Marco Island      | 76 | 72 | 71 | 74 | 293 |
| 13 | Rick Woulfe       | Fort Lauderdale   | 76 | 72 | 72 | 73 | 293 |
| 13 | Josh McCumber     | Middleburg        | 74 | 74 | 72 | 73 | 293 |
| 16 | Matthew Saglio    | Clearwater        | 76 | 72 | 73 | 73 | 294 |
| 16 | John Corzilius    | North Port        | 72 | 72 | 78 | 72 | 294 |
| 18 | Justin Trombley   | Tampa             | 72 | 79 | 71 | 73 | 295 |
| 18 | Carl Campanelli   | Boca Raton        | 72 | 76 | 74 | 73 | 295 |
| 18 | Peter Hartmann    | Fort Myers        | 73 | 73 | 75 | 74 | 295 |
| 21 | Michael Bodney    | Ponte Vedra Beach | 77 | 75 | 71 | 73 | 296 |
| 21 | Bobby Lundquist   | Sanford           | 76 | 68 | 73 | 79 | 296 |
| 21 | Chad Lytton       | Titusville        | 71 | 77 | 75 | 73 | 296 |
| 24 | Jeff Klauk        | Ponte Vedra Beach | 76 | 73 | 71 | 77 | 297 |
| 24 | Pleasant Hughes   | West Palm Beach   | 71 | 76 | 73 | 77 | 297 |
| 24 | Ian Peterson      | Orlando           | 75 | 71 | 79 | 72 | 297 |
| 27 | Michael Berzovich | Longwood          | 74 | 75 | 72 | 77 | 298 |
| 28 | Troy Wheat        | Boynton Beach     | 77 | 75 | 71 | 76 | 299 |
| 28 | Bobby Dick        | Tallahassee       | 73 | 76 | 76 | 74 | 299 |
| 30 | Robert Jacks      | Fort Myers        | 79 | 72 | 73 | 76 | 300 |
| 30 | Vinny Graffeo     | Boca Raton        | 75 | 71 | 77 | 77 | 300 |
| 32 | Sean O'Malia      | Clearwater        | 80 | 71 | 74 | 76 | 301 |
| 32 | Chip Holcombe     | Casselberry       | 76 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 301 |
| 32 | Blane Brown       | Brooksville       | 74 | 71 | 77 | 79 | 301 |
| 35 | Chad Ibbotson     | Maitland          | 76 | 74 | 76 | 76 | 302 |
| 35 | David McDowell    | Safety Harbor     | 75 | 71 | 77 | 79 | 302 |
| 35 | Ron Aldy          | Gainesville       | 77 | 72 | 77 | 76 | 302 |
| 38 | Neil Vanleeuwen   | Palm Harbor       | 75 | 72 | 74 | 82 | 303 |
| 38 | Brian Opal        | Longwood          | 72 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 303 |
| 38 | Chris Matarese    | Naples            | 77 | 72 | 78 | 76 | 303 |
| 38 | John Walmsley     | Valrico           | 71 | 75 | 80 | 77 | 303 |
| 38 | Mark Leetzow      | Sarasota          | 72 | 78 | 80 | 73 | 303 |
| 38 | John Darr         | Gainesville       | 75 | 72 | 81 | 75 | 303 |
| 44 | Andy Spears       | Palm City         | 76 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 304 |
| 44 | Tim O'Neil        | Auburndale        | 76 | 76 | 78 | 74 | 304 |
| 44 | David Mobley      | Jacksonville      | 72 | 75 | 80 | 77 | 304 |
| 47 | George Roat       | Windermere        | 77 | 74 | 75 | 79 | 305 |
| 47 | Eddie Bannister   | Winter Park       | 77 | 71 | 81 | 76 | 305 |
| 49 | Tommy Dudley      | Jacksonville      | 79 | 77 | 74 | 77 | 307 |
| 49 | Paul Melson       | Plantation        | 80 | 70 | 79 | 78 | 307 |
| 49 | Jim Marshall      | Tallahassee       | 77 | 75 | 79 | 76 | 307 |