

DOGWOOD INVITATIONAL

Pay for play not far away for Tech golfer

Seth Reeves counts the days until U.S. Amateur in August.

By Steve Hummer shummer@ajc.com

Having locked down his business-management degree from Georgia Tech in May, Seth Reeves took no break at all before plunging into his advanced studies in golf.

There's no standing around when your intent is to join the columns of Yellow Jackets driving PGA Tour courtesy cars. You cannonball into the deep end.

The brief span since graduation has been devoted to rounding out his amateur resume, making the circuit of all the best events. While at the same time slapping a left-handed overlapping grip on the idea that this game is about to get as serious as a paycheck.

At this week's Dogwood Invitational at Druid Hills Golf Club, his fourth, Reeves entered as the highest-ranked amateur in the field (26th in the world). In the Tony directional tournaments preceding the Dogwood, he has been on point — finishing third in the Northeast Amateur and sixth in the Southeast.

The Dogwood's Wednesday leader, Reeves shot a 3-under 69 on Thursday to go 10 under through two rounds. Low, but not quite low enough. Winthrop rising sophomore Zach Seabolt shot 63 on Thursday to take a share of the lead at 11 under. Georgia State's Davin White (65 on Thursday) joined Seabolt atop the leaderboard.

All this activity eventually will lead Reeves back home again when he likely will make his last unpaid appearance at August's U.S. Amateur at the Atlanta Athletic Club. For a kid who grew up in Duluth, close enough to the AAC to thumb a ride there if he had to, it is the most perfect kind of way to close a chapter.

"To say that it's going to be my last amateur event and sleep in my own bed, it'll be pretty special for me no matter how it goes," he said.

Because he has played so well and his ranking falls so neatly within the top 50, Reeves has no need to qualify for the U.S. Amateur. He's in.

Sort of a fantasy come true. And he would know something about that.

The kid has a minor in make-believe. His Twitter account is loaded with quotations from "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Chronicles of Narnia," with a little "Harry Potter" thrown in. He figures that's more interesting than putting out there what he had for lunch or his favorite color.

"The whole world doesn't need to know what I'm doing. I'd rather get inspired and inspire other people," he said.

Escaping to different worlds seems to help when a putt won't drop in this one. Say Reeves wasn't overjoyed with shooting a 69, which he wasn't Thursday. Too many birdies were left unrealized. He knew he could get away afterward and watch an episode of the Netflix adventure "Arrow."

Figuring to turn pro after August, Reeves has an inventory of tools that will serve him well. He is one of the longest hitters coming out of college, and at Tech he added the maturity and consistency he needed to temper that.

He has the confidence

— his interaction with such other former Tech players as Stewart Cink and Matt Kuchar has demystified the PGA Tour, he said.

Most important, Reeves said he has learned at a tender age to appreciate the larger themes of life, beyond the mechanics of hitting a power draw. "I'm playing

better because I can get over (disappointment) faster. I think I have good perspective and realize that life goes on, it's just a game," he said.

It is the golf, and the career it may provide, that's the fantasy.



Seth Reeves, who was the first-day leader, is one stroke off the pace after shooting a 3-under 69 on Thursday in the second round of the Dogwood Invitational at Druid Hills Golf Club. BRANT SANDERLIN /BSANDERLIN@AJC.COM