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Georgia Southern University



Steven Fisk Looks to Extend His Remarkable Season
The junior competes in the NCAA Regionals Monday.
Marc Gignac
Men's Golf
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STATESBORO – Georgia Southern's [Steven Fisk](#) lined up his putt on his final hole of the second round at the Warrior Princeville Makai Invitational in Princeville, Hawaii, back in October.

He had 16 feet left, and if he rolled it in, he would make birdie and shoot 59, the lowest score in collegiate golf history. He struck it firm, and it was on line before just slipping past the cup.

That round is a microcosm of Fisk's season. Just as that was one of the most incredible rounds in college golf history, the junior has put together arguably the greatest season in Georgia Southern men's golf history. But it has been bittersweet in that each fantastic achievement has brought with it a sliver of disappointment that keeps him wanting more. He has tasted the cake, but not the icing.

Case in point – shooting a 60. Fisk is one of 13 college golfers in the history of the game to shoot 60, a monumental accomplishment to be sure, but he was inches away from being the **ONLY** player to shoot 59.

Another example - the Palmer Cup. The top six American collegiate golfers according to the Golfstat rankings make the United States Palmer Cup Team and compete against an International squad in a Ryder Cup format each summer. It a tremendous honor to be selected for the team. Fisk ranked in the top-6 all fall, moved to as high as second early in the spring and was sixth the week before the top-6 received their exemptions. On the day the picks were made and the final rankings released, he had fallen to seventh.

Final illustration – the Sun Belt Championship. Fisk shot a 65 in the last round to help the Eagles advance to match play with an automatic team bid to the NCAA Regionals on the line. He won his match in the semifinals, and the Eagles advanced but lost to Coastal Carolina in the championship match. On the outside looking in for an at-large team bid, GS missed the cut, but Fisk received a bid as an individual. It was the first selection for an Eagle individual since Bo Fennell in 1991, yet another monumental accomplishment, but a challenge he'll have to face without his teammates.

Tournament Name: NCAA Kissimmee Regional
Host: Central Florida

"It will be weird," says Fisk. "I've never played for Georgia Southern without my teammates. So it's different. It kind of stinks."

Location: Kissimmee, Fla.

Dates: May 14-16

Course: [Reunion - Watson Course](#)

Par: 72 (7,154 yards)

Format: 54 holes (18 each day)

Field: *Teams* - Vanderbilt, Florida, North Carolina, South Florida, Kent State, Arizona, Purdue, Colorado State, Saint Mary's (CA), UCF, Coastal Carolina, Jacksonville State, Georgetown, Central Connecticut State.

Individuals - [Steven Fisk](#) (Georgia Southern), R.J. Keur (UAB), Yanick Schutz (South Alabama), Billy Tom Sargent (Western Kentucky) and Saptak Talwar (Sacred Heart).

Fisk is currently ranked 21st by Golfstat, leads the Sun Belt in scoring average and has finished in the top-10, including three top-5s and two wins, in seven of 10 events. Named to the Haskins Award Watch List, the Ben Hogan Award Watch List and a Jack Nicklaus Award semifinalist, he has shot 72 or better in 25 of 30 rounds this season and currently owns the school record for career and single-season scoring average in addition to posting the lowest round in school history.

It is one hell of a sundae, but it would be better with a cherry on top. The chance to add that comes next week at the NCAA Regional in Kissimmee Florida, where Fisk will compete with 14 teams and four individuals May 14-16 for a chance to advance to the NCAA Finals in Stillwater, Oklahoma, May 25-30 at Karsten Creek. The low five teams and low individual not on those teams from each regional move on.

"Having representation at regionals is what we're after every year," said Georgia Southern coach [Carter Collins](#). "Steven is going to represent us, we're proud of his accomplishments and it's always great when you're competing at the postseason level."

Not too shabby for a guy who has never had a golf swing lesson. He is completely self-taught, deliberate and methodical, and a perfectionist to boot. He has had some help with his putter in recent years, but his swing is all his.

In his own words, it's?

"Unconventional," he says. "Just back and through, and it works for me. I try not to video it, and nobody else wants to see it on video either. I'm not the most flexible person, so I think I'm a little bit restricted in what I am physically able to do. I'm not the type of person that worries about what my swing looks like. It's more what it feels like."

Noticing a lack of golf courses in the area, Fisk's father, Chris, decided to acquire some farm land and build a 9-hole course, which opened when Steven was about 5-years-old. Steven started spending time out there with his dad and got hooked on the game. At about age 7, he realized golf is what he wanted to do, and furthermore, the only thing he wanted to do.

"I realized that - I'm going to be honest - I'm not really good at anything else, so I'm going to stick with what I'm good at," he says. "I was always surrounded by golf and never really played any other sports. I ran with it and was always good at it. So I think that was appealing to me that I was good at something, so I wanted to keep doing it."

Fisk would spend hour upon hour at the course, especially in the summer, so much so that course employees kept an eye on him.

"I'd spend almost all day down there," he remembers. "I'd get babysat by whoever was working the pro shop. If it got too hot, they'd have to pull me back inside and make me have some water. I got told, 'you have to eat' a lot. It's just a 9-hole course, and you can get through it in a little over an hour. I'm pretty sure I played it six times in one day when I was a kid."

As he got older, Fisk began playing in junior tournaments, and it became obvious he was good enough to play college golf. His biggest asset was his consistency. His low round would be 69 or 70, but his high round as rarely over 74. Power 5 schools showed some interest, but they like guys who can go really low, and Fisk had yet to show that ability.

"I would never play really good, but I never played really bad," says Fisk. "They want to get a guy that can go low, that can post the 65 or 66, and I didn't do that a whole lot. I would always be around 70, maybe 69, but I was never the kid that would go out there and shoot 70 one round and 82 the next either. I might shoot 72, 74, 75, but I never played really bad."

Fisk's temperament on the course in junior golf events also hurt him in the recruiting process. All that time spent practicing as a youth had made him a perfectionist. He knew he was a good player at a young age and drove himself to be better. Missed shots sparked anger, which manifested itself in some visible tirades and affected his game for stretches of holes.

"I ran pretty hot and in junior golf, and I think that was a little bit concerning to some people that were recruiting me," says Fisk. "Even when I got here, Coach Collins was very patient with me, and as I matured and got more comfortable with competitive golf, it got a lot better."

He continued to have success in junior golf after committing to Georgia Southern, even turning some heads on the summer circuit leading up to his freshman season, and won Sun Belt Freshman of the Year in his first year with the Eagles. Learning to manage his emotions and improving his mental game have provided the improvement he needed to put it all together this season. He has trained his mind to confront the inevitable adversity that comes in a round, forget about the last shot and move on to the next one.

"Something bad is going to happen in a round, you have a split second to make a decision whether or not you're going to get upset about what just happened and I've learned to just wait," says Fisk. "What am I going to do about it now? The only thing I can do is handle it from the situation I just put myself in. I just have to take it for what it is. I still do it sometimes. Usually, it's a buildup. You have a couple of bad bounces in a row, a couple lip outs in a row that I thought were going to go in and all of a sudden, I'm going to get a little hot for a second. But I'm going to calm right back down. I have to move on."

Still meticulous, methodical and very much a perfectionist, Fisk has found his comfort zone, and it has taken his golf game to the next level. He has found the best way for him to make things as easy as possible, given the strengths and weaknesses of his game.

"I'm pretty conservative because I like to play as mistake free as possible," says Fisk. "I think that maybe what I'm best at is managing every individual situation and not making that mistake, which I guess you would call course management. The fall that I had this year, it was unbelievable course management. I putted great, but it wasn't necessarily that I played that much better. It was just I put myself in the right spot so many times, and if I missed a shot I missed it in the proper place and it was an easy up and down. I'd get done with the round and think, 'wow, I didn't make that hard on myself.' I think that's been a big difference, just being able to put the ball in the right spots and limit the amount of mistakes that I create."

Fisk will try to put the cherry on top of this sundae of a season, starting next week in Kissimmee, and advance to nationals, something that has not been done by an Eagle since 2010. It will be the best field he has played in all season, and advancing will require three great rounds. He will also be competing without his teammates for the first time in his career.

"I'll miss the comradery of being on the road with the guys and helping each other prepare during the practice round when we usually talk about what clubs to hit and how we're going to play each hole," says Fisk. "All I'm trying to do now is get my game ready and as sharp as it can be. I'll be as ready as I can get. Once I'm on the golf

course, I'm there, and all I can do is manage what's in front of me."

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