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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Steven Fisk Just Happy to be Playing Golf Again

The senior spent six days in the hospital in July.

Marc Gignac

Men's Golf

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STATESBORO – Georgia Southern senior [Steven Fisk](#) woke up with a fever.

Not a bad one, but it came at an extremely inopportune time. He was set to play in a US Amateur Qualifier at Brickyard Golf Club that day and hoping to post a score that would put him on track for a second-straight appearance in the US Am.

He muddled through the round, shooting a 74, but could not shake the fever and had to withdraw in the second round. Fisk would rather lose a limb then withdraw from a golf tournament, so clearly, he was in pretty bad shape.

The rest of the week was spent shuttling to doctor's offices, urgent care facilities and sleeping, trying to regulate the temperature of cold sweats. A shot was given, but the fever only got worse. Finally, he'd had enough, checked himself into the hospital and wondered what the heck was going on.

But things only got worse. Days went by as doctors worked diligently to figure out the problem. His temperature climbed to 105.7 degrees, and he was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. He was hooked up to oxygen and an IV.

"I was pretty out of it at that point and didn't really know what was going on around me," says Fisk. "I just heard ICU and 'okay, take me. I feel terrible. Just get me better as fast as possible.' They took really good care of me."

Golf, which is like water for Steven, became an afterthought, even though the start of his senior season was about a month away. After visiting one night, Georgia Southern coach [Carter Collins](#) left the hospital and could not shake the overwhelming feeling of fear.

"I was really scared for him," he says. "His symptoms got very bad for a short time, and we just didn't know where it was going when those symptoms started to spike. I had a lot of emotions, but golf was literally the last thing I was thinking about."

Bacterial pneumonia was determined to be the culprit, and antibiotics were administered. Slowly but surely, they worked their magic. After six days in the hospital, Fisk, with 10 pounds melted from his lithe frame, was released with orders from doctors to rest.

Under normal circumstances, those orders would have been noted and logged but not in any way followed, but this time, Fisk had the good sense to comply. Golf

could wait a week or two.

"I knew that I didn't have any time to have a setback so I knew that I needed to wait as long as I could possibly wait until I could hit the ground running again," he says.

The waiting made Fisk love golf even more, something he thought impossible.

"I didn't touch a club for three weeks, which for me is crazy," Fisk says. "I hated it, but it made me appreciate golf when I got back into it. I missed getting to play, and thinking I might not be ready for the fall was a little bit scary, so when I was able to play and qualify for our first event I had different appreciation for it."

A tie for 17th at the Invitational at The Ocean Course in the season opener would be a tremendous accomplishment for most college golfers, especially if they had to take a month off before the event.

Not Fisk. The Eagles' second tournament, two weeks after the Invitational, started a stretch of four events in four weeks. He won them all.

It's a streak not seen in NCAA Division I golf since NC State's Matt Hill in 2009 and the first time any Eagle golfer has won four straight tournaments.

Fisk shot a combined 48-under-par in the 12 rounds, was under par in all 12 and shot in the 60s in his last eight. He shared medalist honors at the Shoal Creek Invitational and won the next three events outright, posting a lower score in each tournament. He now has seven career wins, one shy of the Georgia Southern record, set by Jodie Mudd from 1979-82. Now ranked 20th in the country, Fisk posted a scoring average of 68.36 in the fall.

"I knew it would take some time, but I knew he would get back at some point," says Collins. "I'm very surprised it happened as early as it did considering the state of his body in recovery. To win four in a row after what he went through not long ago is unbelievable."

Not only has Fisk experienced unprecedented individual success, but the Eagles put together a fall to remember as a team. Georgia Southern won two team titles and shot a combined 99-under in their final three tournaments. The Eagles shot under par in the last nine rounds of the fall and recorded seven rounds that rank in the top-15 in school history, including a school record 18-under-par 266 at the Fighting Irish Classic.

The lineup in those events consisted of Fisk, sophomore [Avery Price](#), and freshmen [Wilson Andress](#), [Ben Carr](#) and [Mason Williams](#). A team captain and one of two seniors on the squad, Fisk takes a lot of pride in the success the Eagles enjoyed as a team so far.

"I really have enjoyed helping the young guys, helping them as much as I can with the differences between college golf and junior golf or if I know some information about a course, trying to set them up with a good game plan so they can be as successful as possible," he says. "It's a role that I really like and something I was really looking forward to being able to do."

Playing college golf is more than just the tournaments too. It is a group of usually 5-8 people hopping in a van and spending 3-4 days together - on the road, on the course, in the hotel and breaking bread. A special bond develops. Where junior golf is about the individual, college golf is more about camaraderie.

"I think he has more appreciation for the sport and more appreciation for his teammates and being able to go on the road with them and spend another year playing college golf," said Collins. "It was taken away from him for a short time."

Being hospitalized for six days and in the ICU for a spell also gives one a little perspective on life.

"Being as sick as I was makes you think about a few things and take a step back and think about what is important and maybe not letting certain things get to you," said Fisk. "You just have a different appreciation for the things that really do matter."

Now healthy, Fisk and the Eagles can hardly wait for the spring season, which starts when they host the GS Individual Collegiate at the University Course Feb. 3-4. The Eagles start team tournament play at the Gator Invitational Feb. 16-17 and host their home event, the Schenkel Invitational, March 15-17 at Forest Heights Country Club.

Fisk already has his mark all over the Georgia Southern record books, but his goal, in terms of legacy, is greater than that.

"Coach Collins always talks about leaving the program better than you found it, and that's something I've tried to do every single year," he says.

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