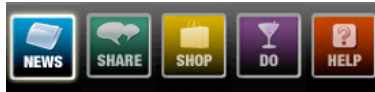


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Disc golfers come south to lead Savannah Open

NATHAN DOMINITZ | Sunday, January 11, 2009 at 12:30 am



Hunter McRae/Savannah Morning NewsPam Reineke of Orlando makes a final shot into the basket at hole 6 at Tom Triplett Community Park in Pooler during the Pro Open Women's Division of the fifth annual Savannah Open disc golf tournament.

Johansen leads defending champion Schweberger

The North Carolina invasion has morphed into a two-headed monster at the fifth annual Savannah Open Disc Golf Tournament.

Two-time defending champion Brian Schweberger of Tarboro, N.C., (near Raleigh) is in great position after two rounds Saturday at Tom Triplett Park in Pooler. He shot a 6-under 55 from the blue (long) tees for the first 18 holes, and a 6-under 48 from the yellow (short) tees in round two.

However, that's only good enough for second place at 103.

Michael Johansen of Denver, N.C., (near Charlotte) followed a 57 with a 10-under 44 to stand alone at 101 with today's third (and final) round set to tee off at 10 a.m.

"(Schweberger) is the best player in the state (of North Carolina)," Johansen said. "We battle back and forth and pretty much split North Carolina and South Carolina in half."

The disc golf pros are familiar foes and friends, as well as endorsers of rival disc manufacturers Innova (Schweberger) and Discraft (Johansen). Schweberger, 35, is ranked No. 21 in the Professional Disc Golf Association world rankings (1,024; elite is 1,000 and above). Johansen, 29, is 47th (1,013).

"If we didn't get paired in the first round, we usually get paired together the next," said Schweberger, who will be in the top group of five with Johansen today.

Schweberger, who said the level of competition is better this year, will be adding to a productive history in Savannah. He was second in 2005, fifth in 2006 and the winner the past two years.

"Brian's got a pretty good track record at most places," Johansen said. "We've played many rounds together. We kind of know what to shoot."

He said he won't be watching the leaderboard today, instead "playing the course."

Johansen said that a winning score today at the par-61 course would be a 57 or 58, "and make Schwebie shoot really low to beat me."

For his part, Schweberger said, "I'm happy just to be playing" after back problems limited his outings. Still, he won 16 of 24 tournaments entered in 2008. One of the two he had to skip in December was won by Johansen in Charleston, S.C.

Also in the mix for the Pro Open men's title is a Georgian, third-place Jason Makarovich (106) of Tucker. Savannah's Aaron Thomas, who finished second by one stroke each of the past two years, is at 110.

The four-player Pro Open women's division belongs to Sarah Stanhope of Easley, S.C. Ranked No. 10 in the women's world rankings, Stanhope shot a 64-52-116. Orlando's Sandy Gast (129) and world No. 13 Pam Reineke (133) trail, as does Vanessa Chambers (138) of Mount Pleasant, S.C.

Stanhope was the PDGA 2008 female rookie of the year, when she won the Savannah Open's pro women's title.

"She is going to be incredibly good. She is a rising star," said Chambers, 50, a women's pro world champion in 1987 and '88 and inductee to the Disc Golf Hall of Fame in Augusta.

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Brian Schweberger 55-48-103

Jason Makarovich 59-47-106

Matt Dollar 60-48-108

Jeff Bryk 60-49-109

Jonas Card 62-47-109

Allen Hermosillo 60-50-110

Aaron Thomas 61-49-110

More scores, 2C

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