

Confident Solis swings way to Pinnacle Am title

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Matt Solis has seen better days putting the golf ball.

Fortunately, his ball-striking was second to none at the Pinnacle Amateur on Saturday and Sunday. And that was enough to help him earn his second career victory on the Quad City Amateur Tour after rounds of 68-70.

"It hit me the best I have in awhile," the 20-year old Bettendorf resident said. "I didn't really make the putts, but my ball-striking kept me in the game and that's a positive right there."

Solis finished up his sophomore season at Indian Hills Community College this past spring as a member of its NJCAA National Tournament Championship squad. It fed him into a summer with some doubt as to exactly where he would land this fall.

Finally settling on an offer from Illinois State University last month, Solis was looking to gain some more confidence before hitting the road en route to his first practice at ISU next week.

Needless to say, he did just that.

"I really wanted to get a victory before the end of the summer," said Solis, noting this was his last tournament before heading back to school. "I haven't won on the QCAm Tour this summer, so it's good to get one."

Solis' first victory on tour came back at the Quad City Amateur event at Emeis Golf Course in Davenport in 2010. He had been shut out of the winner's circle ever since.

David Lawrence, though, is still searching for his first tournament victory on the local amateur circuit. The Moline product and senior-to-be at Eastern Illinois University, came close this weekend, finishing in solo second with rounds of 69-71.

"Overall, I'm happy with the way I played," he said. "And, I'm happy with the way I'm heading back into school. I feel like I'm in the best form of my life and that's all I can ask for."

Lawrence has had a great summer where he has seen a jump in the level of his golf game. Hard work has really paid off, but a change in location also has done him some good.

A long-time member at Oakwood Country Club, Lawrence joined Short Hills this summer, joining many of the top local amateurs at the East Moline club. The increase in competition on a daily basis has really helped Lawrence in tournament situations.

"It's unbelievable how much it has helped," said Lawrence. "Every day of the week, unless I go out and shoot something in the 60s, I'm not going to be the low score in my group. And that's a lot of fun."

Solis had to hold off a lot of good players right behind him. Lawrence, Joe Irwin (18th place, 69-84) and Dan Fisher (third place, 69-72) all started the day just one shot back.

He wasn't sure if his 1-under-par round on Sunday would hold up as a winner.

"I knew it would be close," Solis said. "I had no idea what people in front of me were shooting, so I was just trying to play my own game out there and stay positive."

Tim Flaherty came in 4th place (72-73) and Kurt Slattery (73-73) and Dusty Drenth (72-74) tied for fifth.

- Long does it again: For the second consecutive week, Mike Long was crowned champion of the senior's division. He built himself a good enough cushion after day one to allow himself to be able to struggle a little bit in Sunday's final round yet still hold on for the victory.

Long (69-77) finished three shots ahead of Fred Lukasik (74-75) who finished in second place alone. Mark Drenth (74-76) was third place by himself.