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colorado open

Colo. Open title would leave a mark

By Anthony Cotton
The Denver Post

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From the most abject hacker to Tiger Woods, every golfer has his or her own measuring stick. Perhaps it's breaking 100 for the first time; maybe it's going through a round without losing a ball in the water or woods.

For some, it's being good enough to make a mark in the game — which is where Derek Tolan and Chris Kamin find themselves today entering the final round of the Colorado Open. Tolan is 23, just at the beginning of a burgeoning professional career after starring at the University of Colorado. Kamin is 35 and has knocked around the fringes of the pro game for close to a decade, playing everywhere from the mini-tours to the Asian, Canadian and Nationwide Tours.

Despite the difference in age and experience, both recognize the importance, personally and professionally, of hoisting the winner's trophy this afternoon at Green Valley Ranch.

Golf

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When Tolan showed up earlier this week, he had a target score in mind, based on how he was feeling and playing. It is quite a testimony to the state of his game that, after shooting a 4-under-par 67 on Saturday to move to 15-under for the tournament, he admitted he still hadn't hit his mark.

"There's still some work to do," he said. "I'm definitely on pace, but I have to keep doing what I'm doing — maybe even do a little bit better."

Tolan, whose three-day total of 198 is a tournament record, has won as a pro. In late June he took the San Juan Open in New Mexico, a victory that netted \$15,000 as well as a Rolex watch.

While winning in his home state would be priceless, Tolan says he's not going to spend much time thinking about what could be.

"I'm just worried right now about the things that I can control," he said. "Someone could shoot a 62 (today) and there's not a thing I can do about it except maybe try to match it."

Kamin actually did that one stroke better in the Wednesday practice round, firing a course-record 10-under 61. Like Tolan, that number is

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indicative of how well the Phoenix resident has been playing. Kamin is second on the money list on the Gateway mini-tour.

After his third-round 67, Kamin is two strokes behind Tolan and two ahead of 2007 champion John Douma. It is the second time in two appearances in the event Kamin will play in the final group of the tournament — in 2006 he fell to sixth place despite shooting 1-under on the day.

That year, Dustin White shot a 65 to win and earn a place in what would be the last edition of the PGA Tour's International at Castle Pines. While there isn't such a perk this time, that doesn't mean there wouldn't be a boost to be had from finishing on top.

"I still wake up in the morning thinking that I'm getting better and that I can still get better, and that's what keeps me going," Kamin said.

"I know what I need to do to get back on the Nationwide Tour or get on the PGA Tour. To accomplish those things under pressure at the end of a tournament, that's really what you're looking for."

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