



Baines: Ex-Buff aims to take care of business at Q school

By Gary Baines
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They say Q school can be one of the most grueling, pressure-packed situations professional golfers face in their careers.

Some players — even some well-known PGA Tour players — have gone through the Tour's qualifying process five or six times before making it stick.

Former University of Colorado golfer Matt Call hopes to be an anomaly. At 30, when many players of similar age have gone through qualifying school several times, he's a newcomer to the process.

And — at least so far — he's made it look easy.

By virtue of finishing fourth last week in the second stage of qualifying, Call assured himself of playing on either the PGA or Nationwide tour in 2008. And by finishing in the top 25 and ties in the final stage Nov. 28-Dec. 3 in Winter Garden, Fla., Call would secure a coveted PGA Tour card for next year.

That's quite an accomplishment for a guy who eight months ago was working in the commercial real estate business in the Denver Tech Center.

"When I finished with second stage, I was saying to someone, 'I was working with CB Richard Ellis (real estate corporation) in March. Now I'm going to the final stage of Q school,'" Call said in a phone interview this week. "It's an amazing path life takes you on."

While many of his fellow golfers at CU made attempts straight out of school to play golf professionally, Call took a full-time job, eventually becoming director of golf at Woodmoor Pines Golf Club in Monument. But after leaving that job a year ago, and not touching a club at all for four months while working in commercial real estate, he felt a different Call-ing (pardon the pun): to compete full-time.

Since then, all Call has done is win the local qualifying for the U.S. Open, finish 16th in the PGA national club pro tournament, qualify for the PGA Championship, win the Dakotas Tour Championship, win the Colorado PGA Section Championship, and advance to the final stage of PGA Tour qualifying.

"A lot of my buddies at CU — Ben Portie, Kane Webber and Matt Zions — haven't made the trip to the (Q school) finals, so I feel very blessed to go in my first try," said Call, a Castle Rock resident. "That said, I don't want to sound cocky, but my game has progressed to the point that I felt very confident going into the second stage."

After receiving an exemption through Stage 1 by virtue of his top-20 finish in the national club pro, Call shot a 3-under-par 281 total at a "beast of a course" in McKinney, Texas last week, battling a 7,400-yard

layout and winds blowing 25-30 mph.

While Call tied for fourth, Webber came in 24th, missing the standard necessary to advance to the final stage by a mere two shots. Others former CU golfers who fell short of the mark in Stage 2 elsewhere were Portie and Ed McGlasson. In addition to Call, players with Colorado ties who advanced to the final stage were Bret Guetz and Esteban Toledo.

In the six-round Q school final stage, the top 25 players and ties receive 2008 PGA Tour cards, the next 50 get full exemptions on the Nationwide circuit, and the rest in the field of 156 receive conditional Nationwide status.

"It's real nice because a lot of the pressure is off at this point," Call said. "Once you make it to the final stage, you've got some status. It frees you up to play without feeling a ton of pressure. But if I hadn't gotten through second stage, it's back to square one.

"The goal at this point is to get a PGA Tour card — no ifs, ands, or buts about it. There's no sense in setting the bar any lower. And if I play the same consistent golf I have been, I think I can do it."

Call has come a long way in a short time, and golf's promised land is on the horizon.



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CU men's golf team signs foursome

Camera staff report

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Second-year Colorado men's golf coach Roy Edwards signed four players to letters of intent during the early national signing period.

Signed letters came from Johnny Widmer, from the Cayman Islands via Bradenton, Fla.; Kevin Kring from Springfield, Mo.; Josh Creel, from Cheyenne, Wyo., and Jason Burstyn, of Miami, Fla.

Widmer is listed as the No. 66 junior in the Golfweek/Titleist rankings, with Kring rated No. 99 and Burstyn No. 120; Creel did not have enough events to be ranked, but did well in local and regional tournaments in the Rocky Mountain region.

"We are very excited about this class," Edwards said. "With a tremendous amount of hard work ... this group can be the cornerstone for a lot of our future success at CU. The 2008 high school graduating class is one of the deepest we have ever seen. We expect several of these guys to have an immediate impact on our golf program."

Edwards was named head coach in July 2006, well into the junior amateur season. So this was his first recruiting class where he could take a full year to scout and evaluate talent.

Widmer has been playing internationally for the Cayman Islands men's team while attending the Pendleton School in Bradenton, where he was coached by Shane Reiser of the IMG Academies. He has an impressive list of amateur accomplishments, which include Caribbean Junior Championships medalist honors in both 2002 and 2006. He has numerous Future Collegians World Tour (FCWT) top-20 finishes, including a win in the 2005 St. Petersburg event. He has two runner-up finishes in the Optimist International Championship (2003, 2006). He was the Cayman Islands men's champion in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Creel was a first-team all-state (4A) performer his freshman, junior and senior years at Cheyenne Central High School. He finished second in the state meet as a senior (76-78—154). His scoring average for his senior season was 70.6.

Kring, who was ranked No. 74 in the American Junior Golf Association this past summer, set the Missouri state high school record for low score, recording a 63 to win the All City Invitational at the Twin Oaks Country Club. In his most recent amateur tournament, he won the Oklahoma Junior Golf Association Whitehawk Shoot-Out in Bixby with a 66-74—140 scorecard.

"Kevin is one of the most decorated players in the history of the Missouri high school golf," Edwards said.

Burstyn, a Miami native, was selected to the 2005 and 2006 Miami Herald All-Dade County golf teams.

The class of four completes CU's recruiting for the 2008-09 season.



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