

GOLF

Overdue win stirs Stewart

By Reid Hanley
Chicago Tribune

PONTE VEDRA, Fla.—Payne Stewart has all the shots for the Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass. That's nothing new.

But now he has something else to go with those shots: a victory. Last year the 30-year-old Stewart set a PGA Tour record for most money won without a victory. Stewart's impressive 20-under-par victory at Bay Hill just might start something, and the Tournament Players Championship, which starts Thursday, might be his next victory.

"I proved to myself what I have always maintained, that I was capable of winning out here," said Stewart, who had nine second-place finishes between victories. "Shooting 20 under par at Bay Hill, I had no idea I was going to do that."

"When I would be in position, everybody would think, 'What's he going to do this time to not win?' Now that I have won, they are going to think: 'Oh, oh, there he is again on the board. You've got to watch out for him. He's won.' It may influence the way somebody else plays if they see me up there again now that I have won."

"It's going to make it easier for me whether it's this week, next week or whenever I tee it up. Each time I get in contention to win a golf tournament now, it's going to be easier for me because I have won again."

Bay Hill wasn't just handed to Stewart. He grabbed it with a 63-65 finish. He had to play well because David Frost was right on his tail with a 65-67 over the final 36 holes to finish three shots behind.

"I think what made it so nice for me was it wasn't a gift," said Stewart, who survived a bogey and a missed green on the back nine. "David didn't back off a bit. He made me win. If he doesn't show up, I win by 10 shots."

Stewart's victory would have been noted by the golfing community because it broke his nonwinning streak of three years. The rest of the world took notice when Stewart donated his \$108,000 winnings to an Orlando cancer charity in memory of his father, Bill, who died of cancer in 1981.

Stewart had planned to donate his winnings at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, but Johnny Miller had other ideas and won the tournament with a final round of 66. After another runner-up finish at Pebble Beach, the usually easygoing Stewart was just plain mad. He stayed mad and missed the next two cuts before snapping out of a funk and tying for second at the Honda Classic. Winning in Orlando, where he lives, and donating the money in memory of his father made up for a lot of second places.

"I always thought I wanted to do something for him, in memory of him," said Stewart. "It would have been nice to give \$50,000, but it made a statement. It really meant something to me. The reason I did it [win] was because of him and my mother. They gave me the opportunity to do what I wanted to do. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here. I just felt \$108,000 would really make a statement. I think it really opened some people's eyes that we are individuals like anybody else. We're nothing special, we just make a living playing golf. Sometimes we want to give something back."

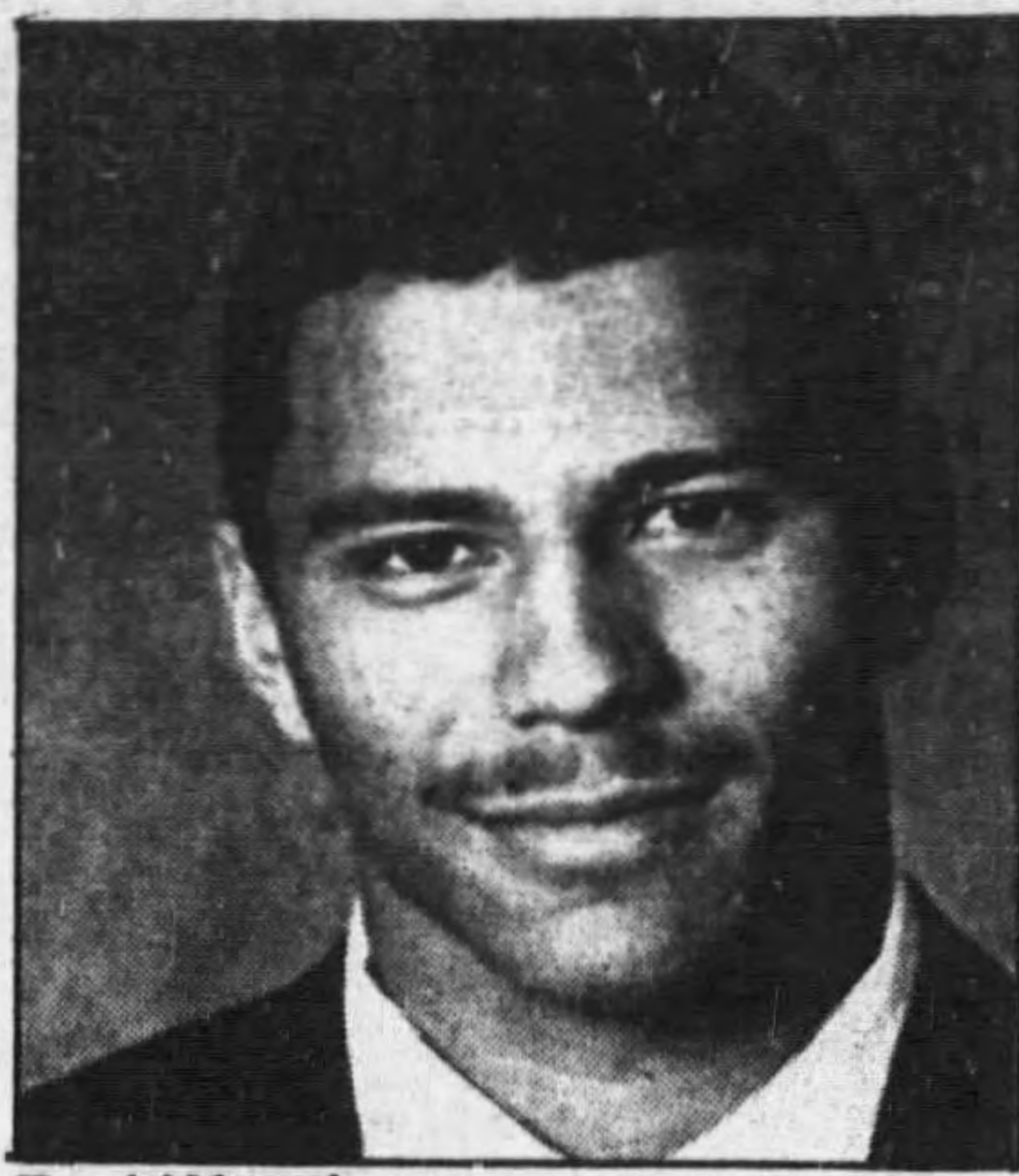
Stewart, who has won \$246,068 this season, needed the victory more than he needed the money. There are still a lot of tournaments and a lot of money to be won this season.

He could win this week. He's on a long list of favorites in a tournament in which 97 of the 144-man field have won tournaments. You've got to like the chances of Stewart, leading money-winner Corey Pavin, Lanny Wadkins, Mark Calcavecchia and Ben Crenshaw. But what about Greg Norman, Jack Nicklaus, Bernhard Langer, Tom Watson, Seve Ballesteros or Raymond Floyd? It's pick 'em this week.

The Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass, despite all the modifications done since its opening in 1982, is still a demanding course. The prevailing winds off the ocean are expected to blow this year after a year's absence. It will take a great mental and physical effort to win at TPC.

"You have to think your way around at the TPC course," said Stewart, who finished 10th a year ago. "At Doral [where he tied for second] I had no idea where I wanted to be. I was in a fog. On this golf course you can't play just one way. You either fade it or draw it, and I can work the ball both ways. You have to do that. Golf's not a one-dimensional game and I can do those things with the ball."

More importantly, he can now win.



Rod Woodson

Big 10 investigates Woodson's deal with agent

From Chicago Tribune wires

NEW YORK—Purdue and the Big 10 are investigating reports that cornerback Rod Woodson is being sued after reportedly accepting \$21,606 from an agent.

Woodson, a probable first-round National Football League draft choice, is attending Purdue and is scheduled to compete in a track meet in Florida this weekend.

A report in Wednesday's New York Daily News said Woodson

has been named in a suit filed in New York State Supreme Court by Norby Walters, a New York-based sports and entertainment agent. Walters is suing for \$500,000 in damages, alleging that Woodson broke a contract he signed Jan. 2, 1987.

"They've had some meetings between athletic director George King and Rod Woodson and his attorney," said Purdue spokesman Jim Vrugink. "It is also in the

hands of the Big 10. Apparently there are other Big 10 athletes involved. At this point, Rod Woodson's eligibility has not been changed."

According to court papers, Woodson signed a promissory note for \$4,000 issued by Walters May 20, 1986. Since then, Walters and his partner, Lloyd Bloom, have loaned Woodson an additional \$17,606.

Woodson's attorney, Eugene

Parker of Ft. Wayne, said he couldn't comment because he hadn't been able to contact his client.

The NCAA allows undergraduates to consult agents, but prohibits them from entering into an agreement or accepting cash or discussing financial arrangements before their eligibility expires. Players violating the rules can be declared ineligible and their teams penalized.

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