

Koepke seeks 3rd title at City Am

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 01 August 2014 19:25 -



Steve Koepke has not been entirely happy with his golf game since he won the U.S. Open local qualifier in May at the Blue Top Ridge course in Riverside, but that could be changing.

Koepke fired a 4-under-par 68 in the first round of the 61st Annual Men's City Amateur tournament Friday at Gardner Golf Course to put himself in solid contention for his third title.

Jeff Wenthe grabbed the first-day lead with a 5-under 67. Koepke stands in second place with his 68, with Ryan Schrimper another shot back at 69.

Chris James, a two-time champion, is tied for fourth place with Brigham Stewart at 1-under 71.

Koepke, 41, had an early tee time Friday and was the clubhouse leader for much of the day until Wenthe came along to move in front.

Koepke collected 14 pars and four birdies on the 6,670-yard layout at Gardner.

"The fact that it was a clean card (no bogeys) was really the most satisfying part of the day," he said. "It was very stress-free."

Koepke made four birdies on the first 11 holes, but finished the day with seven straight pars. "When I got to 4-under on 11, I thought I might have a special day going on," he remarked.

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Koepke made some clutch putts to avoid a bogey all day and was satisfied with his round. "You can't win it today, but you can lose it today," he said.

Koepke, a golf coach at Jefferson High School, won City Am titles in 2009 and 2011, the years his children were born. James, a golf coach at Washington High School, claimed City Am titles in 2008 and 2010, so both of them are chasing their third titles.

Sam Aossey and Bob Kollsmith share the record with four City Am championships. Aossey won in 1986, 1994, 1998 and 2004. Kollsmith prevailed in 1982, 1985, 1987 and 1999.

Dave Aossey won three titles in 1954, 1956 and 1960.

Dane Worley, who won the City Am in 2012 and 2013, is not playing in the tournament this year.

Wenthe is one of the top golfers on the local scene and has been a member of the Cedar Rapids Ryder Cub team, but has never won a City Am title.

Wenthe, Koepke, Schrimper and James will be in the final group to tee off Saturday at 1:12 p.m. in the second round at Gardner. The third and final round is scheduled for Sunday at Ellis Park.

A total of 128 golfers competed Friday.

MEN'S CITY AM
Gardner Golf Course
Par-72

FIRST ROUND TOP 10

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1. Jeff Wenthe 67

2. Steve Koepke 68

3. Ryan Schrimper 69

4. Brigham Stewart 71

Chris James 71

6. Davis Sutton 73

Mark Fisher 73

Matt Taylor 73

Scot Glasford 73

10. Eric Cress 74

Jason Carlson 74

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Justin Pansegrau 74