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Under Water Photo

Reeves wins the third annual Jerry Rawls Classic

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John A. Bowersmith
Shawn Reeves putts on the second hole during the Rawls Classic Sunday at the Rawls Course. (John A. Bowersmith/Lubbock Avalanche-Journal)

By Don Williams

Shawn Reeves' first two Lubbock golf titles came three weeks apart last summer at the LakeRidge Stampede and the Lubbock Country Club Par Buster.

Both of those are partnerships, a format in which a good teammate can keep a guy's bogey off the scorecard.

Reeves didn't need a partner this weekend at the Rawls Course, because he hardly made a bogey.

The redhead his friends call "Cheeto" won the Jerry Rawls Classic by six shots Sunday, playing the final 33 holes without a bogey. He finished 8 under par after shooting a 2-under 70 final round.

Not bad considering he had played Texas Tech's links-style layout only once before the tournament started on Friday.

"I'd heard people talk about it," said Reeves, 33, who grew up in Plainview and played at Midland College. "I enjoyed it. It plays pretty hard and fast. We had about three different wind directions. The first day was out of the south. Yesterday was kind of calm and maybe out of the north and today out of the east. It played different every day."

But Reeves played it consistently, sandwiching two rounds of 70 around a 68. Sunday wasn't as smooth as the

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2-under sounded since Reeves missed more greens than he found on the front nine. But he grinded out 10 pars in a row to start the round and never lost the lead.

"I had a lot of one-putts, a whole lot of one-putts," he said. "I was just trying to stay patient. I wasn't hitting it very well, and I could tell that when I got off the range this morning."

Reeves had a one-shot lead with eight holes to go. But Shannon Allen, an Oral Roberts University golfer from Plainview, suffered through a back-nine collapse before signing for a 79. With a pair of three-putts and a couple of wayward tee shots, Allen crashed to 6-over in the last seven holes after being tied for the lead starting the day.

"I played good the first two days," said Allen, who shot 66 Saturday. "Got in the last group and couldn't get it done. But maybe next time. I'll just take it as a learning experience."

The victory was Reeves' third in Lubbock in the last 12 months. He won the Stampede with Cody King and the Par Buster with J.D. Dickerson. The last few years, Reeves came in from Sherman to play in tournaments now and then. Now he's moving to Lubbock, so he'll be able to play the city majors more often.

He'll try to keep the same chipping and putting stroke he had at the Rawls.

"My short game saved me, really," he said. "I got every ball up and down today that I missed the green. Nobody was burning it up. I just tried to stay patient and keep making pars."

Former Tech golfer David Bolen came from five shots back to finish second for the second time in three years. He shot 71 and finished the three-day event at 2-under.

"I hit it as good as I could hit it, really," Bolen said. "I think I hit 17 greens today. I hit it close a few times and kind of hit it in that 15- to 20-foot range a whole bunch all day. I just couldn't make a putt."

Reeves, Bolen and Allen played in the final threesome, and the best chance to derail Reeves came right at the start. Bolen birdied the par-5 hole No. 2 while Reeves had to make a long putt just to save par. Two holes later, Reeves found himself having to get up and down again - and succeeding, again.

"He was struggling hitting it early," Bolen said. "But he got his irons dialed in after the first few holes, and then he was just on cruise control. No one really put any heat on him."

Reeves' first birdie came at the par-4 11th and gave him a three-shot lead. Allen's fade began right after that. He dropped a shot three-putting the 12th green, then another when he missed a short comebacker for par on No. 15. His tee shot at the par-3 16th had landed in sand traps left of the green on Friday and Saturday, so he made sure not to do that again - and wound up with an unplayable lie the other way.

"I was trying to keep it right, and I did that," he said. "Just a little too far right."

That led to double bogey followed by two bogeys to end on.

"After the front nine, I didn't make any putts, and I just got to pressing hard, trying a little too hard," Allen said. "Nothing happened, and it got kind of aggravating after a while."

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AREA GOLF/Reeves plays a bogey-free final round to win the third annual Jerry Rawls Classic

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Jeff Deitiker 76-73-73-222
 Cody King 75-77-81-223
 Steve Long 80-71-76-227
 John Weast 75-81-74-230
 Ross Tyler 76-74-85-235
 Clayton Carnley 79-76-83-238
 Bryan Gay 91-82-84-257
FIRST FLIGHT
 Justin Dickson 70-80-76-226
 Tracy Witherspoon 76-76-76-228
 Kyle Lukert 79-79-75-233
 Scott Sonnenberg 88-73-75-236
 Curtis Borland 76-73-88-237
 Ronnie Hughes 82-80-81-243
 Garry Copple 83-80-81-244
 Tom Perry 82-80-83-245
 Stan Roberts 85-83-84-252
 Rick Hancock 83-87-82-252
 Rich Eberhardt 81-90-83-254
 Rane Wallace 88-85-89-262
 Abel Marquez 86-79-WD
SECOND FLIGHT
 Jeff Carter 83-77-78-238
 Todd Mykleby 80-80-80-240
 Rick Lusk 83-80-80-243
 T.J. Greenwood 72-81-92-245
 Haffis Banire 76-78-91-245
 Marty Faubus 81-82-83-246
 Steve Owen 80-79-90-249
 Frank Morrison 83-90-78-251
 Nick Nunley 85-91-90-266
 Pierce Thomas 86-93-92-271
 Jeremy Dickson 88-97-87-272
THIRD FLIGHT
 John Kirk 85-78-86-249
 Mike Trammel 88-83-89-260
 Mike Karon 85-80-96-261
 Chuck Chapman 88-91-86-265
 Trey Strange 86-93-102-281
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SENIOR FLIGHT

(Net scores)

x-David Hallgarth 69-73-76-218

Ken Beebe 75-71-72-218

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Gordon Davis 76-74-78-228

Dale Hayden 77-75-77-229

Harold Flournoy 85-72-72-229

Charles Bentley 79-76-77-232

Jerry Smith 86-74-77-237

Dusty Thomas 79-83-75-237

Richard Whitehead 83-74-85-242

Darrell Phillips 77-85-89-251

Ronnie McWilliams 102-91-90-283

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 Sunday's Final Round
 CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT
 Shawn Reeves 70-68-70 - 208
 David Bolen 73-70-71 - 214
 Shannon Allen 72-66-79 - 217
 Scott Rundell 69-74-76 - 219
 Jason Staggs 72-72-79 - 223
 Bill Ashley 73-75-77 - 225
 Robert McKinney 74-75-79 - 228
 Randy Richardson 71-82-82 - 235

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