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## Sports

# Oregon's Steve Rintoul could be second coming of Greg Norman

By Dan Goulet

Of the Emerald

Only identical twins are as similar to one another.

At first glance, a case could be made that Oregon golfer Steve Rintoul and pro golfer Greg Norman are blood brothers. After all, they look, talk and golf alike.

You name it, they share it — the Clorox-white hair, the game, the swing, the accent and at times, the score.

About the only difference between the two is the bank account, but that could change in time. "Wherever you play professionally there's a lot of money," Rintoul said. "And I have the desire."

He also has the talent. The junior from Australia just capped off a successful season with a spot on the Pacific 10 Conference's second team. "I miss being in the winner's circle," he said. "The third round really cost me in the Pac-10s, but I have next year."

Next year can wait, because there's still more golf to be played. Oregon's destiny is uncertain — its invitation to the NCAA championships could get lost in the mail. Rintoul's fate is more certain. He should receive an at-large bid by the selection committee even if Oregon does not.

"We've had a real up-and-down season," Rintoul said. "We won the Stockton tourney early in the year, but then we never played well together the rest of the season."

Rintoul's coming off a treacherous golf stretch. Beginning with the Cougar Classic in Utah, April 24 through the Pac-10s last week, he's played 15 rounds of golf in 15 days.

For now, he'll take it easy. "I haven't picked up a club since the Pac-10s. I'm going to take some time off and catch up in school."

However, he'll be back at the tee Monday trying to qualify for the U.S. Open. Last year, he missed qualifying by just one stroke. "I missed playing with Greg Norman," Rintoul said. "I should play with him this year."

To play in the U.S. Open, Rintoul must qualify twice in sectional play, the first of which will be at the Eugene Country Club. If he's successful, he may have to play the second sectional back East because he might be in Columbus, Ohio, for the NCAAs. "I'll try to qualify for the U.S. Open first and then play two days later in the NCAAs," he said.

However, Rintoul would rather play the second sectional closer to Oregon. "Back east there's different weather, dif-



Photo by John Giustina

Oregon's Steve Rintoul is looking beyond his college days to the professional golfing circuit.

ferent grass," he said. "Last year during the NCAAs in North Carolina, it took us three days to figure out the greens because they used Bermuda grass, and it's tough to read Bermuda grass."

Ohio may look different, but not as different as Rintoul's jump from Mollymook, Australia to Oregon. The coastal town about 100 miles south of Sydney is where Rintoul grew up and harnessed his game.

"I lived right on the golf course and played the same sports as the other kids — rugby, cricket, surfing," he said. "I started playing golf when I was 12 years old and really got hooked on it while I was caddying."

While attempting to qualify for the Australian Open with a high school all-star team, Rin-

toul met J.D. Mowlds and Kevin Smallbeck, who played at the University of Portland. They all kept in contact, and soon Rintoul found himself packing for the United States.

Rintoul still has one year of college play left and will try to hone his skills even more in the next year. "I have all the tools, but my course management should improve," he said. "Putting has been my biggest strength. I had solid green play too, after hitting about 12 to 15 greens a round."

"I have to remember that every shot is important," he continued. "If you're four-under or four-over, it doesn't matter. It's the next shot you hit that is most important. Bill Mayfair from Arizona State University is a great example of course management."

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