

ORONDO - Rick Fehr got his acceptance speech out, dusted it off, and delivered.

Oh, how he delivered.

The PGA Tour pro from host Desert Canyon Golf Resort tied a tournament course record with a 7-under-par 65 Wednesday to win the Pacific Northwest PGA's Northwest Open.

Fehr completed three rounds in 14-under-par 202, the lowest score in the 93-year history of the tournament, to earn the \$7,500 first prize.

"I'm real pleased. I played better than expected," Fehr said. "This is a good chance to get in the heat of the battle and win one."

It was Fehr's first tournament victory since the 1986 B.C. Open, his only PGA Tour win. He's had seven runner-up finishes on tour since 1991, including at The International last month.

"That's the price you pay for playing in the big leagues," said Fehr, a 32-year-old Seattle native. "That's a long drought."

Since Fehr plans to take the next two weeks off, Wednesday's victory also ended his turbulent summer on a positive note.

From Memorial Day through the end of August, Fehr made the cut in just one of seven PGA Tour tournaments he entered.

But his finish at The International, where he lost a sudden-death playoff to Steve Lowery, seemed to spark his game. He finished in a tie for 15th in the Canadian Open last weekend before returning home for the Northwest Open.

Fehr made only two bogeys in three rounds over the Desert Canyon course. He took the lead with a birdie on the par-5 seventh hole Wednesday and expanded his advantage with an eagle on the par-5 10th hole, the first on the Desert nine. He led by as many as five strokes on the back nine.

Fehr bested Nike Tour pro Greg Whisman by four shots. Second-round leader Joe Lynch, an amateur from Sahalee Country Club in Redmond shot a 4-over-par 76 to finish in third place with a 6-under 210.

Fehr, who seemed almost embarrassed last year when he finished second to a field of club pros, didn't appear to mind winning this time.

"It was a real good field this year and they're getting used to the course," Fehr said. "It's really not as difficult as it appears."

At least, not to Fehr.

Of the 24 players who entered the final round within 10 strokes of the lead, only three - Fehr, Randy Fossum of Lynnwood Golf Course, and Jeff Tachell of Twin Rivers Golf Course - broke 70. Fossum shot a 4-under 68 to finish fourth and Tachell fired a 69 to move into a tie for fifth place with former long-drive champion John McComish.

Northwest Open

ORONDO - Wednesday's final-round leaders from the Pacific Northwest PGA's Northwest Open, held at the 6,904-yard, par-72 Desert Canyon Golf Resort (a-denotes amateur):

Rick Fehr, Desert Canyon 67-70-65-202

Greg Whisman, Everett, Wash.q69-67-70-206

a-Joe Lynch, Sahalee CC 69-65-76-210

Randy Fossum, Lynnwood GC 70-73-68-211

Jeff Tachell, Twin Rivers GC 74-70-68-212

John McComish, Oak Knoll GC 68-71-73-212

Todd O'Neal, Royal Oaks CC 70-73-70-213

Mark Gardner, Qualchan Creek 69-73-71-213

Chris Mitchell, Sundance GC 69-70-74-213

Brent Murray, Oswego Lake CC 73-67-73-213

Jeff Coston, Semiahmoo G&CC 72-69-72-213

Keith Lienes, Grays Harbor CC 70-68-76-214

Doug Campbell, Auburn GC 69-74-71-214

Mike Gove, Astoria G&CC 71-71-72-214

a-Tim Cruikshank, Col.-Edgwtr 68-70-76-214

Greg McMillan, Linksman Range 71-74-70-215

Chuck Milne, Vanco Range 75-70-70-215

Tom Carey, Sunset Golf Center 74-70-71-215

Mark Keating, Shadow Hills 68-75-72-215

Pat Fitzsimons, Fitz's Golf Studio 74-69-72-215

Joe Trembly, Twin Lakes G&CC 75-72-69-216

Todd Erwin, Canterwood G&CC 69-77-70-216

Scott Williams, Redwood Center 73-73-70-216

a-Chris Jorgensen, Semiahmoo 71-73-72-216

NCW contestants

Ed Paine, Kahler Glen GC 70-73-77-220

Bob Janes, Trysting Tree GC 75-70-79-224

Buster Whitney, Leavenworth GC 75-73-80-228

Von Smith, Desert Canyon 77-74-77-228