



Denver Post Photo by Lyn Alweis

OLIVE ADDS A BIT OF GARNISH TO STATE GOLF FETE

John Olive of Colorado Springs, who didn't take up golf until his cadet days at the Air Force Academy, putts from the fringe of the 18th green Sunday en route to a closing round 33-35-68 and a 280 total that gave him the men's stroke play championship at the Foothills Golf Club.

OLIVE SEIZES STATE CROWN

Self-Made Golfer Passes 'Kiddie Korps'

By RALPH MOORE
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John Olive didn't choke Sunday and the 31-year-old real estate executive thus saved himself from one of the oldest cliches in sports.

Playing out of the Country Club of Colorado the self-made golfer who was born in the Bronx and who played both basketball and baseball at the Air Force Academy, fired a tidy 33-35-68 to win the N.C. (Tub) Morris state stroke golf championship with a 280.

Asked when he first began playing competitive golf, a friend of Olive blurted out "Thursday." It was very nearly correct.

"I started playing golf while I was a cadet," the 1967 AFA graduate said. "This is only my second state amateur tournament."

Warren Simmons, former state amateur champion on the faculty board at the AFA, told Olive to "keep your head down and hit the ground with every shot." It was his only lesson other than "what I picked up watching other guys."

ALL OF THIS was bitter dregs for the two 18-year-old frontrunners Olive passed with a string of four birdies that started at the eighth hole at the Foothills Golf Club.

Steve Jones, of the High Plains Golf Club in Yuma, Colo., had a lock on the lead with his nine-under-par 207 going into Sunday's final round. And, it appeared to be another youth move as Terry Kahl of Fitzsimons Golf Club (and a sophomore-to-be at the University of Colorado) held second with his 209, three better than Olive.

Olive and Gary Longfellow, the Lakewood Country Club veteran, felt like chaperones teeing it up Sunday.

But when the dust settled on the front nine Jones found himself tied with Olive. Kahl, despite an eagle deuce on the par-four third hole, was a shot back and Longfellow was three back.

Kahl took the lead at nine-under with a husky drive on the 395-yard third and a 120-yard wedge shot that burned into the cup on the fly.

But he triple-bogeyed the par-four ninth where his second shot flew out of bounds behind the green and he finished the crippling hole with three putts.

Kahl's 37-37-74 was a jolting round in that he rallied to trail Olive by only one shot after a bird on the 17th. But he went into the water on the 18th with his tee shot and scrambled for a double-bogey six that left him in fourth with a 283.

THE DISCONSOLATE youngster who will be 19 on July 2, put it bluntly when he said "I just lost five shots on two holes and you don't win with that kind of golf."

Saturday he came within one shot of the course record with a 65 and credited new contact lenses for improved approach shots and putting. Sunday the right lens broke and wouldn't stay in. He removed both just prior to his eagle on the third hole.

Longfellow, the only amateur to win the Colorado Open, three-putted the sixth and seventh holes and missed birdie putts of seven feet on both the 11th and 17th and had a nine-footer curl off on the 10th. He made up three shots on the field with his 35-34-69 and tied Jones for second at 282.

"Had I putted better ... and I made those I would have been right in there," Longfellow correctly assessed his chances.

Jones was the victim of a weak start with bogeys on second and third holes. His five at the third came off a short one

putt as his short game failed him. Also, he failed to make any significant putts and this is a shattering experience for young players who expect everything to go in. His prior rounds of 71-68-68 came off a command of the par fives and putts that dropped from every angle.

Sunday he was one over on the par fives and pointed out that "I have missed a lot of 10-to-20-footers and I couldn't make a birdie." He will be 19 on Dec. 27.

"I JUST TRIED too hard," he said of his pressure-packed position going into the final round. He returned a 38-37-75 for his 282.

Olive has a Ping putter he picked up from an AFA buddy the year this style came out. He has reshafted it but refuses to give it up.

"I'm just a weekend player, really," he smiled. "The guys call me the greatest par putter around."

Sunday he cashed in on birdie putts of six, 15, 20 and five feet, the bird on the ninth coming after a 9-iron shot he put a foot from the pin.

"That was my best shot of the tournament," he said. "And I left it (the 9-iron) in my car and had to run back and get it after we teed it up on the first hole."

Olive had two bogeys when he three-putted the seventh, but then he put the four-birdie string together and through

the 11th he had a three-shot lead with his nine-under status.

His only other bogey came at the 16th where he drove into the ditch to go to eight under. Longfellow birdied there but then missed the short birdie at 17th that would have tied for the lead. Kahl birdied 17 to tie Longfellow but gave it back on the 18th.

Olive earned an exemption for the championship flight in the Colorado Open (July 11-17) at the Hiwan Golf Club while Jones and Kahl were in Monday's qualifying for one of 10 spots among the nearly 50 hopefuls.

"I guess I'd like to play in that ... Hiwan's the best challenge in the state. But I sure wasn't counting on it," Olive said.

FINAL RESULTS

John Olive	71-72-69-68-280
Sleeve Jones	71-68-69-75-282
Gary Longfellow	72-67-74-69-282
Terry Kahl	73-71-65-74-283
Jeff Armstrong	72-71-71-70-284
Bill Loeffler	75-68-71-70-284
Rick Petri	75-70-70-70-285
Tom Woodard	72-72-69-72-285
Jeff Polts	74-73-71-70-288
Paul Kroehnke	74-73-70-71-288
Carter Mathies	75-68-70-75-288
Craig Stephens	69-78-70-72-289
Mark Crabtree	77-72-70-71-290
Dave Lee	76-72-68-74-290
Rich McClintock	69-74-73-75-291
Rick DeWitt	76-73-71-72-292
Ron Moore	73-74-72-73-292
Mike Edgeling	70-76-75-72-293
Chris Nordling	74-73-72-74-293
Mike	72-75-72-74-293
Paul Brown	74-74-70-75-293
Jerry Compton	71-76-72-77-296
Jerry Kidney	70-76-78-73-297
Bob Lowry	76-73-71-77-297
Jim Nosevitz	72-75-74-76-297
Jon Arnold	74-73-72-78-297
Tom Lee	71-72-69-79-297
Vic Geisler	71-76-71-74-298
Randy Tolley	76-72-73-77-298
Mickey Byrne	74-72-73-79-298
Doug Alley	71-75-75-78-299
Gary Polumbus	74-72-76-78-300
Gary Potter	75-74-71-80-300
John Hicks	76-73-81-77-307
Bill Nelson	75-72-81-80-308
Randy Fisk	73-72-74-WD

The Leaders' Cards

PAR OUT	454	345	434	36
Olive Out	444	344	523	33
Jones	455	346	434	38
Longfellow	444	246	524	35
Kahl	452	345	437	37
PAR IN	434	344	534	36-36-72 (288)
Olive In	344	344	534	35-33-68 (280)
Jones In	465	434	434	37-38-75 (282)
Longfellow In	454	334	434	34-35-69 (2128)
Kahl In	454	344	526	37-37-74 (283)