

Kahl clinches Medal Play title in playoff

By DAVE NELSON

News Staff

Like a pitcher struggling without his best fastball, Terry Kahl threw an assortment of junk at The Ranch Country Club's 6,870 yards for 18 holes Sunday before winning the State Medal Play golf championship in a sudden death playoff.

"I really didn't have much going for me out there today," the 22-year-old collegiate ace from the University of Colorado admitted after drilling a birdie putt of 17 feet on the second hole of an extra-hole duel with Pat English. "Frankly, I didn't play very well," Kahl insisted after rallying from a two-shot deficit on the final two holes to force the first playoff since 1954 when Ron Moore of Cherry Hills Country Club faced Randy Carey in an 18-hole duel at Denver Country Club.

Kahl took a precarious one-shot lead into Sunday's final round after carding a brilliant 65 Saturday. But he could do no better than match The Ranch's par of 71 Sunday while English posted a 69 which left the two knotted with 72-hole totals of 278.

"I KNOW I was fortunate to win this tournament," Kahl insisted. "I kind of scraped it around today. But I'm really proud of myself, too. I knew I wasn't playing particularly well but I kept grinding away and hung in there and didn't quit or get down on myself. That's really important to me — maybe even as important as winning the tournament."

Meanwhile, the sudden turn of events proved to be a bitter disappointment for English, whose father, Jim English Sr., has claimed the State Medal Play championship three times, including back-to-back victories in 1958 and 1959. "I played 16 holes almost perfect and then I guess I half-choked on the last two," English admitted.

The 19-year-old sophomore-to-be at Stanford held a two-shot lead with only two holes remaining. English battled grimly to salvage his par on the 157-yard 17th after catching a trap with a wayward 8-iron off the tee. He blasted out of the sand to within five feet of the pin and holed a difficult, pressure-packed, par-saving putt.

Kahl, meanwhile, flew a 7-iron straight at the flagstick and dropped a seven-foot birdie putt to pull within a shot of the lead.

English then caught the rough with a 1-iron off the tee on the 18th hole, pitched his approach into another trap and bogeyed the hole while Kahl — paired with English in the final threesome of the day — finished off a routine par to force the playoff.

English avoided disaster on the first extra hole when he "slam-dunked" a 12-foot putt into the hole to salvage a par after leaving his approach short of the green and chipping short of the pin.

Kahl, who had registered a routine par on the first playoff hole, then ended it when he birdied the difficult, 420-yard, par-4 second hole.

"This is a funny game," Kahl noted. "I played much better than I did today when I finished second to Steve (Jones) in the State Match Play finals. If I had played anyone else but Steve that day, I'd probably have won."

JONES, THE BRUTE-STRONG youngster from Yuma, scored a 3 and 2 victory over Kahl in the finals of the Match Play championship last month at Steamboat Springs.

It was another banner day for the University of Colorado golf team, which survived the ax in a recent cutback of minor sports at the school. Jones and Rick Cramer, two of Kahl's teammates at CU, tied for third place with 72-hole totals of 280. Mike Putnam, a member of the University of New Mexico golf team, finished fifth at 281.

Cramer, who started the day at even par, was within a single shot of the lead after going 4-under on the front nine. But he double-bogeyed the 11th hole when he drove his tee shot out of bounds and never got within range again despite posting the low round of the day, a 67.

Jones managed a 2-under 69 Sunday while Putnam self-destructed with a horrendous 8 on the 12th hole and finished with a 73 after posting a competitive course-record round of 64 Saturday.

Putnam was tied with English for the lead after a birdie putt of no more than a foot on the 11th hole. But he hammered his tee shot on the 12th into a water hazard, sprayed his next shot out of bounds after taking the customary drop penalty and then caught a trap before two-putting the green.

Kahl bogeyed four holes on the front side while charting a 2-over par total of 38 before rallying with a 2-under 33 on the back nine.

"I played fairly decent on the back side, but the front side was a joke," Kahl observed. "I attribute part of that to nerves. I was real nervous and I didn't sleep well last night. I probably got about three hours sleep total. I kept waking up and thinking about how I wanted to go out and play well. I was nervous most of the way around today."

KAHL WON THE State Junior Match Play title in 1975 while English claimed the State Junior Medal Play crown in 1976.

"I think a lot of people feel like I'm a better match player than I am stroke player," Kahl smiled. "I sort of got that reputation back in high school. I thought about that today and I think that added some fuel to my fire."

Still, it came down to a match play duel with English over the final few holes which preceded the playoff. It was the first medal play title to be decided in extra holes since back-to-back playoffs in 1953 and 1954. Claude Wright defeated Lou North in an 18-hole playoff in 1953 and Carey defeated Moore in a similar 18-hole playoff the following year.

State Medal Play Golf

Final results of the State Medal Play Golf Championship over the 6,870-yard, par 71 Ranch Country Club. x-Terry Kahl won sudden death playoff over Pat English on second extra hole.

x-Terry Kahl	71-71-65-71-278
Pat English	70-70-69-69-278
Rick Cramer	72-72-69-67-280
Steve Jones	70-73-68-69-280
Mike Putnam	71-73-64-73-218
Roger Little	71-68-70-73-282
Gary Longfellow	75-70-68-70-283
Tom McGraw	70-74-70-72-286
Don Garzewski	70-72-73-71-286
Blake Stirling	72-74-73-71-290
Gary Polunibus	77-71-72-70-290
Mike Mulhern	71-72-70-77-290
Dave Finsterwald Jr.	73-70-76-72-291
Dave Holobaugh	75-74-69-73-291
Mark Simpson	72-70-72-77-291
Tom Reed	74-70-71-76-291
Rick Buckles	71-72-73-75-291
Chuck Reeves	72-73-72-74-291
Todd Wood	76-72-70-74-292
Jerry Nosewicz	72-76-77-73-293
Chris Nordling	72-70-79-72-293
Ron Chase	73-73-75-72-293
David Brown	73-76-71-73-293
Dick Dorn	75-70-73-76-294
Carter Mathies	72-75-71-76-294
Barry Jennings	75-73-69-77-294
Jim Ostrom	75-74-72-74-295
Neil Ginsberg	77-70-74-74-295
Brad Penfold	75-69-73-78-295
Doug Hebard	73-74-74-75-296
Mark Howler	71-74-73-78-296
Bob Stallman	76-69-75-77-297
Chris Scena	71-74-71-81-297
Jim Gaona	75-73-73-77-298
Jeff Reich	74-77-70-77-298
Dave Allen	83-69-69-78-299
Mark Armistead	73-73-71-84-301



NEWS PHOTO BY HOWARD BROCK

Terry Kahl watches shot during Sunday's final round of the State Medal Play Championship. Kahl won in a playoff with Pat English.