

Surprised Potter wins stroke play

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LAKEWOOD — While the television crews and the crowds were following every movement of the final two groups in the state stroke play championship at Lakewood Country Club Friday, Matt Potter finished his round without fanfare.

Little did he know, nor did any of the spectators suspect, that he would shortly thereafter become the 1984 state stroke champ.

After Potter finished, he looked on at the 18th green while two groups of players who had started the day ahead of him came in with their heads hanging in dejection.

Potter, a sophomore on the University of Colorado golf team, shot his third consecutive even-par 71 Friday to claim the amateur title by one shot over a group of four players. His one-over-par 285 total was one better than those of Grand Junction's Paul Nolen, Boulder's Mick Brethower, Littleton's Dave Holobaugh and Englewood's Doug Wherry.

Nolen, the leader by four strokes going into the day, won a playoff to claim second place. Both of the top two tournament finishers automatically make the amateur Colorado Cup team.

The win for Potter marks the fourth time in the last five years a present or former CU player has won the stroke play.

But it was an especially gratifying victory for Potter, for it capped a week in which he had already qualified for the U.S. Amateur Championship.

"I still can't believe it," the 20-year-old from Lakewood said. "I was ecstatic after qualifying (Monday at the same course). And after the first rounds of the stroke play, I wasn't all that concerned (with winning). But I just kept playing."

"I really had no inkling of winning. I thought I would have had to shoot 66 or 67 to win. I was just hoping to shoot 71 or 72 and maybe get second place. I mean, even if Nolen shot 75 or 76, he would have been OK. Only with about two holes left did I think I had any chance."



MATT POTTER: Shoots 71 to win stroke play.

Indeed, how could anyone realistically expect to come back from an eight-stroke deficit going into the final round to win?

But Nolen, the PAC-10 champion at Arizona who led after both the second and third rounds, unexpectedly ballooned to an 80 Friday by shooting eight-over 44 on the back nine. For the last 25 holes of the tournament, Nolen went thirteen over par.

"The strange thing was," Nolen said, "that I" (See POTTER, Page 2B)

was nervous the first nine and played a lot better (36). But I just lost all confidence after that. I missed about every putt under five feet and when you do that, you're in bad shape."

But even with Nolen faltering, there were four other players that started out ahead of Potter and should have had a better chance at the win.

Down the stretch, it actually looked as if Brethower, an ex-CU Buff, would claim the winner's trophy. But he bogeyed each of the last two holes to finish with 76 and in the second-place tie. Mike Mathies, who shared second-place with Brethower after three rounds, could do no better than 83. Neither Chris Nordling (77) nor Holobaugh (74) could make a move either. Wherry, with a 70, was one of only three players with a subpar round Friday.

"I didn't think everybody would come back like that," said Potter, who was red-shirted last year at CU. "It just shows that you can never tell."

Potter attributed much of his good fortune this week at Lakewood to his knowledge of the course. He plays almost every day after working in the golf shop.

"I actually wasn't hitting the ball that great," he said. "But I know where you have to hit it. You've got to play this golf course smart."

"I finally realized that I could compete with these guys. I used to think you had to hit everything perfect to keep up, but now I know you can miss shots every now and then as long as you play smart."

Potter made two birdies and two bogeys on the day. But one of those bogeys — on the par-3 seventh hole — he was happy to escape with. He hit his first shot

out of bounds, but sank a four-foot putt with his second ball to salvage a four.

Potter said he also benefitted from not having to deal with the pressure of playing in the last group.

State Stroke Play Results

Final results of the state stroke play golf championship that was played at the par-71 Lakewood Country Club.

Matt Potter, Lakewood	72-71-71-71-285
Paul Nolen, Grand Junction	70-64-72-80-286
David Holobaugh, Littleton	70-69-73-74-286
Mick Brethower, Boulder	72-69-69-76-286
Doug Wherry, Englewood	72-74-70-70-286
Rick Petri, Greeley	70-66-80-71-287
Brad Penfold, Brighton	72-72-70-73-287
Kevin Gallacher, Cortez	73-72-70-73-288
Gary Longfellow, Lakewood	74-70-71-73-288
Chris Nordling, Aurora	69-70-72-77-288
Mike Knight, Littleton	71-72-74-72-289
Brandt Jobe, Littleton	75-69-74-72-290
Don Keffer, Golden	70-71-75-74-290
Steve Ivan, Pueblo	74-71-70-76-291
Ron Kosmatka, Aurora	71-73-71-76-291
Tim Smith, Colorado Springs	69-70-76-77-292
Paul Gagnon, Colorado Springs	73-75-76-69-293
Mike Mathies, Littleton	71-69-70-83-293
Kent Moore, Littleton	76-70-78-69-293
Warren Simmons, Colo. Spr.	75-75-67-76-293
Tom McGraw, Westminster	73-73-73-75-294
Randy Winn, Boulder	69-76-74-75-294
Larry Wright, Lakewood	72-73-75-74-294
Doug Bakke, Englewood	71-76-74-74-295
Mike Dougherty, Englewood	73-72-78-72-295
Derik Britson, Golden	78-71-76-72-297
Bill Fowler, Lakewood	68-70-82-77-297
Brooks Callahan, Englewood	76-74-74-76-300
Bill Petri, Louisville	77-74-77-72-300
Denny Thomas, Denver	79-71-70-80-300
Roger Little, Englewood	76-73-72-80-301
Cappy Paulding, Littleton	79-72-76-74-301
Jack Ruhs, Denver	73-75-79-74-301
Steve Vanscoy, Fort Collins	73-75-79-74-301
Joe Berta, Canon City	73-78-73-79-303
Jack Egender, Arvada	80-70-77-77-304
Jim Maschinot, Denver	71-79-77-77-304
Mark Fowler, Longmont	75-72-81-77-305
Kevin O'Brien, Denver	76-73-82-74-305
Andy Torgersen, Arvada	72-76-76-81-305
Dave Brown, Englewood	76-72-79-78-305
Don Smith, Aurora	76-71-78-81-306
J.P. Liggett, Aurora	75-76-79-76-306
Todd Wood, Colorado Springs	76-74-81-77-308
Terry Mamuzich, Northglenn	78-73-81-77-309
Tom Brennan, Colorado Springs	73-78-82-78-311
Gene Cahill, Denver	71-79-80-81-311
Paul Lobato, Denver	76-75-83-77-311
John Pappadakis, Colo. Spr.	77-74-77-82-312
Rick DeWitt, Arvada	76-75-86-75-312
Jim Liggett, Aurora	72-76-82-85-315
Joe Pinson, Denver	77-74-80-85-316