Ivan Takes Junior Golf Title

By RALPH MOORE
Denver Post Sports Writer

Steve Ivan, a perfectionist who has
learnt to curb his temper, defeated Jon
Snell, a budding psychologist, 4 and 3
Thursday to win the Colorado Golf Asso-
ciation's state junior match play title at
the Ranch Country Club.

Both Ivan, who will be a senior at
Pueblo South High School next fall, and
Snell, who at 16 returns to Cherry Creek
High School as a junior, had to survive
extra-hole semifinal matches in order to
gain the finals.

Snell went 55 holes against Dave
Hodgkins of the Pinehurst Country Club
and won on the second playoff hole when
Hodgkins went out of bounds.

IVAN, WHO WOULD like to pattern
himself after Jack Nicklaus, was one
down to Mark Armitstead of the Ranch
and nearby Broomfield, but pulled even
with a par on the closing hole and won
the 18th (first hole) when the Regis High
School standout failed to get down in two
from a sand bunker.

Julius Boree would have been proud
of the final pairing. Both Ivan, 17, and Snell
hit the ball quickly and with authority in
a competitive, but swiftly played, match.

Ivan, who scored a four-under-par 31 to come from three
down to Brian Woody Tuesday, went two-
cup on the front nine Thursday with a two-
under-par 34.

DESPITE HIS TENDER age, Snell
believes in the power of the mind ("it can
be your best friend or your worst enemy"). He

started bogey, birdie, double-bogey before
he birdied the par four fourth with a
12-foot putt for his only win in the title
match.

"Then the turning point came at the
eighth," he said of the 189-yard par three
8th where the pin placement was locked
in tight behind a protective sand bunker.

"I hit the wrong club trying to draw it
back into that pin placement, and my
swing causes more," he said of the four
iron with which he missed the green. The
bogey there put him two behind Ivan,
who played the entire tournament steady
as a rock.

"I wasn't giving up," Snell pointed out,
"but realistically, I knew Ivan wasn't going
to back up. I knew then I had to make a
couple of birdies."

THE BIRDS ELUDED him, and Ivan
took second under through the 15 holes it
took him to win.

Nothing new for Ivan, the son of Ronald
Ivan, retired dean of student activities at
the University of Southern Colorado. Ivan
has two older brothers who play varsity
golf for USC, Prim and Ron Jr.

"He's the third boy of four," proud Ron
Sr. said. "I have six children."

Also noteworthy is the fact that George
Andrews of Pueblo Centennial was ousted
by Ivan 2 and 1 in the first round, but
George stayed on and carried for Ivan
through the rest of the way. George, Ivan said,
was particularly helpful in reading the
greens.

THE PUEBLO contingent wasn't sur-
pised as Ivan's sub par performance. He

was No. 1 man on the Pueblo South team
which won the state championship by 20
shots.

And he announced his intentions early
by winning his final match medal with a
one-under-par 70 on Tuesday.

"I think it has been my experience that
helped me here," he said of his match
with Snell. "If Iि the worst I can tell what
I'm doing wrong. But I didn't hit a bad
shot and I putted well, thanks to George.
I've also learned to control my temper."}

Ivan has been playing golf since he was
7 "but didn't take it up seriously until I
was in the fifth grade," he said of his lon-
gevity in the game.

NOW HE WANTS a college scholarship
grant in aid, preferably at Arizona, and
he would like to pursue a career.

"I kind of admire Jack Nicklaus," he
said. "I'd like to be up there with him
some place."

While Snell felt 8th hole was the
turning point, he actually lost it at the
tenth where he missed the green and went
three down, and against at the 14th where
he pounded a tee shot into the right haz-
ard and took seven on this supposedly easy
apart five hole. Ivan closed it all out on the
par three 15th where Snell's necessary
birdie putt from the fringe curled off line
10 inches from the cup.

Snell didn't enjoy losing, but he did
enjoy the action. "The power of the mind
is amazing, I discovered. If you are opti-
mistic and have poise, you can make the
shot you want. I learned a lot here."

HE IS WHAT he calls a "wimp of a
kid" and has tried to strengthen his 5'11,
140-pound frame by "pumping weight.
It hasn't helped much, because, Snell
says, "I'm still hitting fives (irons) from
where everyone else is hitting sevens."

"I don't know," Ivan, who is 5'11 and
50 pounds heavier, said graciously, "you
put shots right in there next to mine."

The difference, then, was Ivan's putter
and his navigator, George.

FINAL RESULTS

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT—Steve Ivan def. Jon Snell, 4 and 3; FIRST FLIGHT—Matt Zanora def. Scott Terrell, 2 and 1; SECOND FLIGHT—Wesley Fahn def. Steve Crains, 2 and 1; THIRD FLIGHT—Jim Peterson def. Scott Gilmore, 4 and 3; FOURTH FLIGHT—Eric Anderson def. Jim Markman, 3 and 2; FIFTH FLIGHT—Curtis Abrego def. Joe Markman, 3 and 2; SIXTH FLIGHT—Gayle Baustien def. Paul Elenbogen, 2 and 1; SEVENTH FLIGHT—Steve Ivan def. Paul Elenbogen, 3 and 2; EIGHTH FLIGHT—Don Mayo def. Steve Ivan, 3 and 2.