Longfellow upsets Loeffler in state match play finale

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COLORADO SPRINGS — On the first four holes of yesterday's State Match Play Championship final, Gary Longfellow sank two birdie putts and a 20-foot chip for a third birdie.

It was an indication of things to come at the Broadmoor South Golf Club.

Playing flawlessly at every important turn, Longfellow held off two rallies by Bill Loeffler for a 4-and-2 victory in the 36-hole finale.

It was Longfellow's first state title of any kind since 1978 and his first state match-play championship since 1974.

The 45-year-old United Airlines pilot knew it would be his day after making eight birdies and just one bogey during the morning round.

"I don't believe I've ever had a better round," he said after shooting 65 during the first 18 holes. "I would rank that round with any."

"I've been on the verge of shooting like that. I was ready if I got it going."

Loeffler, the reigning USGA Mid-Amateur champion and a member of the 1967 Walker Cup team, was favored in the final.

But the 39-year-old from Cherry Hills Country Club watched in dismay as Longfellow took an eight-foot birdie putt on No. 2, then two-putted for birdie from 12 feet on No. 3.

On No. 4, a 355-yard, par-4, Longfellow chipped in from the green's edge to go three holes up.