Troyer 5-shot winner in state junior tourney

By GARY BAINES
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Boulder’s Mike Troyer did his best to take all the suspense out of Wednesday’s final round of the State Junior Stroke Play.

The University of Colorado golfer turned the tournament into a rout by closing with a 2-over-par 72 at Lake Valley. After holding a lead as large as seven strokes, he settled for a five-shot victory.

Troyer finished the 54-hole tournament with a 3-over-par 213 total. Pat Fry of Fort Collins played his last 10 holes in 3 under par to shot 73 and grab second place at 218. John Segelke of Englewood (69 Wednesday) and Jason Allen of Pueblo (70) tied for third at 219.

The win makes Troyer just the second player in Colorado history to win the boys’ state junior stroke and junior match play tournaments in the same year. Rick Cramer previously turned the trick, in 1977.

“This is something I’ll remember,” said Troyer, who won the State Junior Match Play last month. “I think I’ve played better before, but this is probably my biggest win because of the name of the tournament, the state junior championship.”

Troyer and fellow Boulder Country Club golfer Ted Scribner have now won the state’s last three major junior events. Scribner, who’s headed for CU, won the 1990 Junior Match Play, and Troyer pulled off the sweep this summer.

In the U.S. Junior Amateur qualifying held Tuesday and Wednesday in conjunction with the state tournament, Segelke, Tom Stacey of Durango and Fry advanced to the nationals, which will be held July 23-27 in Orlando. Segelke was the qualifying medalist at even-par 140, while Stacey had a 71 Wednesday to finish at 146. Fry (148) sank a 15-foot birdie on the third playoff hole to edge out Fort Morgan’s Marty Zulkoski for the final qualifying berth.

Troyer, who will turn 19 years old on Saturday, wasn’t eligible for the national tournament, which is limited to players 17 and under.

Troyer left little doubt Wednesday that he would win the final junior tournament of his career. He came into the day leading by three shots, and had that cut to two when he bogeyed the par-3 fifth hole. But when his closest pursuer, Brian Guetz of Littleton, bogeyed each of the next five holes, it seemed just a matter of time before Troyer was handed the championship trophy.

After 12 holes Wednesday, Troyer had extended his lead to seven. At that point, though, he proceeded to 4-putt the next green for a double bogey, then hit his drive on No. 14 left into a foot-deep well. But Troyer gathered himself, chipped back out into the rough, knocked his third shot 10 feet short of the flag and sank the putt. Easy par.

“I probably would have sweated if we hadn’t found the ball (in the weeds),” Troyer said. “As it was, the other players in the (lead) group weren’t playing that well.”

Troyer played his last five holes in 1 under par to assure the big margin of victory. For the day, he had two birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey.

“I knew Mike was steady; he wasn’t going to give (the win) to anyone,” said Fry, whose rally fell well short despite coming ever so close to a double eagle on the par-5 ninth hole. After his second shot hit the cup there, he 2-putted from 15 feet for a birdie.

Asked if he was surprised by his winning margin, Troyer said.

“I don’t want to sound cocky, but no, not really. I was really relaxed out there today. I wasn’t worried about anything.”

Ironically, one of the keys to Troyer’s play this week was his accurate driving, for which he owes some thanks to fellow competitor Jeff Fujimoto of Arvada, who finished fifth in the tournament. Troyer borrowed a driver from Fujimoto about a week ago and has been hitting it so well that he bought it from him after Wednesday’s round.