

Jones Outpressures Kahl to Don State Amateur Crown

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STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — You don't set course records playing in a match tournament, but Steve Jones of Yuma played 9-under-par golf when it counted Sunday to win the state amateur title by defeating University of Colorado teammate Terry Kahl of Aurora 3 and 2 over 34 holes at the Sheraton-Steamboat Golf Club.

Kahl, who played flawless golf getting into the 36-hole finale, made three critical mistakes during the pressure-packed pairing or the two seniors-to-be might still be playing.

Kahl was even-par and 3-down to Jones after the first nine holes, and he was 1-under through 18 and still minus-2 to Jones.

Jones, a tall bony blond, belted out the longer shots, was deadly near the greens and impossible to stop with a putter in his hand.

"I can say I didn't lose this one," Kahl said of his strenuous day, "Steve went out and won it."

Jones played somewhat erratically in gaining the finals. In his semifinal match against the wily Gary Longfellow of the Lakewood Country Club, he

picked up on four holes on the front nine then rallied from 3-down to win 1-up on the 18th.

"I WAS AWAKE all night, so I had to talk to myself," Jones said of his preparation going into the championship round against the steadier Kahl. "I thought about the positive things and forgot the bad. I thought about how real good I played the last five holes against Longfellow . . . really good."

He also felt he had to get up quickly on Kahl, former state junior match-play champion, and a slight favorite going against Jones.

So, Jones fired the first nine in 33, 3-under the Sheraton-Steamboat par 36-36—72 card. Kahl won one hole against Jones' only bogey. Jones won four holes with birdies.

Jones maintained that kind of pressure for most of the two rounds. Kahl rallied on the back to cut the margin to 1 with wins at the 12th and 14th, but his first mistake came at the par-3 17th, where he three-putted and they went to lunch with Jones leading 2-up.

It was virtually the same pattern in the afternoon. Kahl birdied the first with a near-perfect wedge two feet from the pin, but Jones won the

fifth and seventh with two birds and a par to go 4-up, the widest lead in the match.

TWICE HE CAME out of traps to stay alive and had 1-putt greens of four, eight and 12 feet respectively.

Kahl drilled a 13-footer for a deuce on the par-3 eighth to cut it to 3, but he missed a three-footer at the ninth for a half, his second crucial mistake.

Jones carried his 4-up lead through the 10th, where both birdied, and the 11th, where Kahl had to make a 17-footer to match Jones' routine par 3.

This gave Kahl new life and he won the 12th with a par as Jones hit one of his few off-line wedges. Both birdied the 610-yard 13th, Kahl hitting a four-footer after Jones had a tap-in from 14 inches.

Kahl then whipped a 6-iron 18 inches from the pin on the par-3 14th, the backspin on the ball nearly carrying it into the cup.

But Kahl then came up with his third miscue, a 1-iron tee shot on the dogleg 15th that failed to carry the trees on the right and his ball dropped into Fish Creek. He boldly tried for the green from behind the river but came up short and in the water again.

putt on the 11th (a 17-footer to save par). I thought I had a chance at the 15th (in the afternoon). Before that shot (that went into the water), I'd birdied the 14th and I thought I'd make him do a little work for a change. But, it was a bad shot. I should have used a 3-wood there instead of the 1-iron.

"I didn't make any putts in the morning and still shot 71. That ninth hole (where he missed from four feet to halve the hole) was the turning point. I could have had a birdie 3 for a win there. Instead I made 5."

Sunday's trophy was the first "major" win for Jones, a player who has been consistently around the winner's

circle but, until Sunday, never in it. "I'll take it," he grinned, "my first major."

Jones is exempt from qualifying for the Colorado Open, but Kahl was busy at the Hiwan Golf Club trying for one of 62 places in this year's event July 7-13.

And both are exempt from qualifying for the Trans-Mississippi amateur championship tournament the following week at the Denver Country club.

Warren Simmons of the Air Force Academy defeated 16-year-old Dave Holobough of Littleton High School 3 and 2 in the finals of the consolation flight.