

Liggett wins senior title; Fowler 4th

By GARY BAINES
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DENVER — One shouldn't mistake the seemingly carefree attitude of Jim Liggett for a lack of intensity.

The 55-year old dentist from Aurora is as happy-go-lucky as anyone you'd ever want to meet. Even while playing in golf tournaments, his actions convey the message that he doesn't have a care in the world.

But on the inside, it's a different story. Liggett is as competitive and serious as most, if not more so.

And that spirit helped him rebound from a 77 Thursday in the senior stroke play championships to win his first major amateur title in the state since 1969.

To do it, Liggett pulled an upset of sorts Friday, surpassing the two favorites entering the final round — Ron Moore and Les Fowler. Moore, who led by a stroke going into the

final 18, shot 77 and finished three shots back of Liggett's winning six-over-par 219 total. Boulder's Fowler, who was tied for the lead after two holes Friday, likewise had a less-than-auspicious finish, carding a 78 and ending up in a fourth-place tie with Roger Little at 224. Dale Einspahr, who plays out of the host Ranch Country Club, came in third at 223.

Liggett, a Denver Country Club member who led after the first day of the tourney, started the day two back of Moore and one behind Fowler. But after he birdied the first hole and Moore bogeyed to make for a three-way tie for the lead, Liggett was never headed. In fact, he out-scored Moore by seven shots over the first six holes and held a comfortable five-shot cushion.

"I knew that even though I was behind, I could get it together to-

day," said Liggett, whose only previous major state amateur win was in the 1969 open-division match play. "I got two shots back on the first hole and I knew my game was well under control. And my friends (Fowler and Moore) were having their troubles. I ended up with a five-shot lead after nine and started coasting."

After getting three birdies on the front nine and shooting 34, things started going awry for Liggett. He bogeyed four straight holes — Nos. 13-16 — and his lead was cut to one as Moore tapped in a four-inch birdie on 16.

"It didn't really seem like I was playing that badly, but in reality, I guess I was choking," said Liggett, the runnerup in the tournament to Fowler last year. "My Adams Apple was doing flip flops."

The par-three 17th was pivotal in

deciding the champion. Liggett, who had made a triple bogey on the hole Thursday, put his ball in a bunker behind the green and looked to be facing a bogey at best. Moore, meanwhile, was safely on the green, though some 35 feet from the hole. It seemed that Moore would at least even the tournament going into the final hole.

But thanks to Liggett's sand shot hitting the flagstick and to one of Moore's five three-putts on the day, no such suspenseful ending was in store. Liggett sank a 12 footer for par on 17 and took a two-shot cushion into 18, where he finished with a birdie to account for the three-stroke winning margin.

"The golf gods surfaced when I hit that flagstick," said Liggett. "If I wouldn't have hit it, I would have been at least 30 feet by the hole."

Winning came as no surprise to the doctor.

"I came into the tournament very positive about my potential for doing well," he said. "In a practice round I shot 70. I thought to myself, 'If I can keep my wits about me, I can have a decent score.'"

Senior Stroke Play

Championship Flight results after Friday's final round of the state senior stroke play championship at the Ranch Country Club in Denver:

Jim Liggett, Denver CC	70-77-72—219
Ron Moore, Cherry Hills CC	74-71-77—222
Dale Einspahr, Ranch CC	75-72-76—223
Les Fowler, Boulder CC	74-72-78—224
Roger Little, Inverness CC	73-75-76—224
Larry Eaton, Greeley CC	76-74-75—225
Al Benefiel, Willis Case GC	74-73-79—226
Ken Sorensen, Los Verdes CC	77-75-75—227
Bill Waggner, Denver CC	78-74-75—227
Jack Bradbury, Cherry Hills CC	75-77-75—227
Bob Karlin, Pinehurst CC	75-77-78—230
Dan Hogan, Los Verdes CC	80-75-75—230
Ron Evenson, CC of Colorado	77-78-77—232
Jim Gwinn, Eisenhower GC	78-74-82—234
Lee Rosa, Los Verdes CC	75-79-82—236
Al Ziska, Willis Case GC	76-75-89—240
Bill Tulley, Hyland Hills GC	76-79-86—241
Bill Fulham, Willis Case GC	80-75-87—242