



DICK DAVIS/Rocky Mountain News

Terry Simpson, left, receives assistance from CGA official Jim Topliff after Simpson hit into the rough during the CGA Seniors Tournament.

Eaton easily beats senior field

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PARKER — Maybe somebody ought to check Larry Eaton's driver's license. He says he is 55 years old. He says he belongs in the group of senior golfers who got together for the Colorado Golf Association Senior Stroke Play Championship.

But Eaton annually plays this tournament like one of those hot-shot rookies he keeps anticipating. Without a newcomer to challenge him yesterday, Eaton won his fourth Stroke Play Championship in the five times he has competed in it.

False hopes ran rampant as the field headed into the final round at the Pinery Country Club, with four golfers within three strokes of the defending champion.

But Eaton turned in the best round of the entire championship flight, finishing with a 74 and a total of 227 for 54 holes.

When Eaton finally strolled into the patio to accept his trophy, he was seven strokes ahead of Tom Reed, Terry Simpson, and Jim English, who tied for second place.

Jim Gwinn and Les Fowler, who started the day only a stroke behind the champion, finished tied for fifth (10 strokes behind) and seventh (11 strokes behind), respectively.

"No. 12 was where I lost it," Gwinn said. "I had a good drive and then I made bogey. I just lost my swing."

Sure enough, Gwinn took a triple-bogey on the 13th hole, the same hole which knocked Fowler out of contention and turned the day's competition into a mockery.

Starting with his tee shot, Gwinn

knocked four straight shots into the rough, one of which landed under a bush, forcing him to hit left-handed. Two branches went almost as far as the ball.

When he finally emerged from the rough, he landed in a trap.

At the same time, Fowler was in the rough on the other side of the fairway, and although he emerged in good shape, he took a severe thanks to a stubborn 1-foot putt.

"The field didn't play very well," Eaton said modestly. "Nobody made a move. So all I had to do was play steady."

In fact, Eaton figured he had the tournament all but wrapped up after the ninth hole when his lead was three strokes.

"It didn't seem anybody was hitting particularly well, so I had to feel I had a good chance unless the wheels came off," he said.