

Troyer pulls off match-play title

By Todd Phipers

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FORT MORGAN — Throughout the Colorado Junior Match-Play Tournament this week, Mike Troyer tried to justify to opponents the handcart he used to pull his clubs around the Fort Morgan Country Club Course.

"Everybody has been giving me a hard time about it, and I've had to explain it to everyone," he said yesterday. "I just tell them I'm a wimp now."

If Troyer grew weary of explaining that the cart was necessary because of lingering back problems, the Boulder golfer could have used a new excuse by the end of the tournament yesterday:

That he needed it to pack off this year's championship trophy.

The 18-year-old University of Colorado sophomore-to-be defeated Paul Robinson of Arapahoe High School 2 and 1 to earn the junior match-play title.

Troyer, whose back injury early this spring ended his freshman season at CU and earned him a medical redshirt year, flared up as recently as a week and a half ago, forcing him to withdraw from a tournament.

But with exercises, medication and that much-talked-about pull-cart, he survived the rigors of a qualifying round followed by 36 holes of play a day through yesterday's semifinal win over Tom Richardson and the title victory over Robinson, who beat former Arapahoe teammate Barney Sutley in the other semifinal.

"I was just hoping it would hold up through this," he said. "I

haven't been able to go to my rehab for about a week because of tournaments. It's done all right."

Troyer played a couple of fall tournaments for CU, but his back problems got so bad that he missed the entire spring campaign and concentrated on his business-school studies while undergoing physical therapy.

"It feels different all the time, but I got used to how it was on Tuesday and (Wednesday) I had everything together," he said of a day on which one of his victims was Andy Achziger, playing on his home course.

He wasn't quite as sharp on the final day, but his game still was good enough to hold off his talented 16-year-old championship foe.

Troyer jumped on top immediately in the championship match with a 3-foot birdie putt on the first hole, missed a chance to extend his lead from short range on the second hole and then went 2-up by holing a downhill flop shot for a birdie from behind the green at No. 4 before Robinson's 10-foot putt for birdie slid past the hole.

"I got up on him early, and I just tried to keep that, but he had a couple of saves and a couple of good holes," Troyer said. "He made it close. He was playing solid."

Three different times, Robinson pulled to 1-down — the last time with a two-putt birdie at the par-5 14th hole — only to have Troyer rebuild his margin.

A bogey at the par-4 17th was good enough to do it the last time when the young left-hander missed the green and then three-putted for



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CHAMPION: Colorado Junior Match-Play Tournament winner Mike Troyer sizes up a putt on the seventh green.

a double-bogey, giving Troyer the match.

"I played well. I'm happy," said Robinson, who has two years of eligibility remaining on an Arapahoe team that finished fifth in the state

high-school tournament this year.

"I didn't putt well," added the former state champion in the 14-and-under category. "Mike gave me some chances, but he played real well."