

Anderson meets challenge to win Senior Match Play

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COLORADO SPRINGS — When he shot 84 on Tuesday during qualifying for his first State Senior Match Play Championship, it appeared Larry Anderson was headed for trouble.

Instead, the 50-year-old stockbroker headed home to Greeley yesterday with the champion's trophy.

Anderson completed his improbable title journey at Gleneagle Country Club with a 2-and-1 victory over 58-year-old Charles Sullivan, who also was making his debut in the tournament's championship division.

Sullivan nearly overcame a three-hole deficit on the final six holes by sinking several tough par putts. He also holed a 30-foot chip on No. 15.

But Anderson reached peak form when the match was on the line, as he had done earlier in the week in victories over favorite Warren Simmons and former champions Ed Nosewicz and Les Fowler.

"I'm as tough a competitor as Charles, so that's one of the advantages I have at the end of a round. You can't give in.

"I played better with each round, I got more confident with each round," he added. "Part of it was getting to know the course, plus I hadn't been playing that much. During that qualifying round, I almost didn't make it."

Anderson, a long hitter, became eligible for senior competition when he turned 50 last fall. "I've been waiting for three years to play in these tournaments," he said.

Anderson's long drives made a big difference yesterday. During the first 11 holes, he was 1 under par and had built a three-hole lead. Sullivan appeared to be in serious trouble.

But Sullivan, a former airline pilot, is adept on and

around greens, as he demonstrated on the final nine. On No. 10, he sank a five-foot par putt to halve the hole. On No. 11, he dropped a 15-footer for par to keep pace with Anderson.

"That gave me a shot of adrenalin. I sensed he started getting tentative," said Sullivan, a member of The Ranch Country Club in Northglenn.

On No. 12, a 187-yard par-3, Anderson drove past the green and out of bounds.

"I thought then I could win," said Sullivan, who was two holes behind at that point.

On the 14th hole, a par-4, Sullivan botched two shots, then rallied to sink an 18-foot putt. Anderson botched a short putt, so Sullivan had escaped trouble once more.

On No. 15, a 469-yard par-4, Anderson hit his second shot to the left of the green, then chipped to within tap-in range. Seconds later, Sullivan holed a 30-foot birdie chip.

"Man, oh, man," Anderson said, shaking his head. "This is hard to believe."

Added Sullivan: "If you don't hit it far, you have to be able to putt and chip. I work hard at it. And my wife says I'm a fierce competitor."

On No. 16, a 201-yard par-3, a tense match got more interesting when Anderson's tee shot landed well short of the green. Sullivan had a chance to even the score.

"Enough," Anderson said he told himself.

Anderson managed to halve the hole. He knew a long drive on No. 17 could end the match.

"I hit my best drive of the day, then my best 2-iron," he said.

Sullivan's drive landed in the right rough near a tree stump. He hit a fine second shot considering the conditions, but then shanked a pitch. He nearly chipped in for 4. Anderson two-putted for par from 40 feet to end Sullivan's hopes.