

State Match-Play

Moore surprises self, field

MARY BARKER
Of The Coloradoan

Ron Moore sure didn't play like he was the underdog in the finals of this year's Colorado state Match-Play championship at Fort Collins Country Club.

Then again, maybe he did.

Moore certainly played like he had nothing to lose when he came away with a 1-up victory over Lakewood's Don Keffer after 21 holes Sunday.

Yet, throughout the week the Denver golfer kept insisting he was the overwhelming underdog in this year's tournament. In fact, he and his wife checked in and out of their hotel room each day.

"I kept thinking I was going to lose every day and I didn't want to stick around if I lost" said Moore, laughing after his victory over Keffer.

That laughter was a long time coming though, as Moore and Keffer had to battle through three sudden-death holes before a winner was determined.

Moore advanced after a 1-up victory in the morning over former University of Colorado golfer Terry Kahl while Keffer had an easy 7-6 win over Colorado Springs' Dow Finsterwald Jr. to move into the final.

It appeared Keffer might have the advantage in the early rounds of the championship match. After five holes he had a commanding 2-up lead capitalizing on three missed Moore putts.

"My short game had been great up until this afternoon," Moore said after the match.

But Moore's nervousness seemed to fade on the sixth hole, as he made a long putt for a birdie, to put him just one down. On the very next hole Moore posted another birdie to move into a tie with Keffer, after Keffer's drive was off to the right side of the green.

Keffer missed a putt of his own on the next hole and fell to one under after the front nine. Moore increased his lead to 2-up after another birdie on the 10th hole.

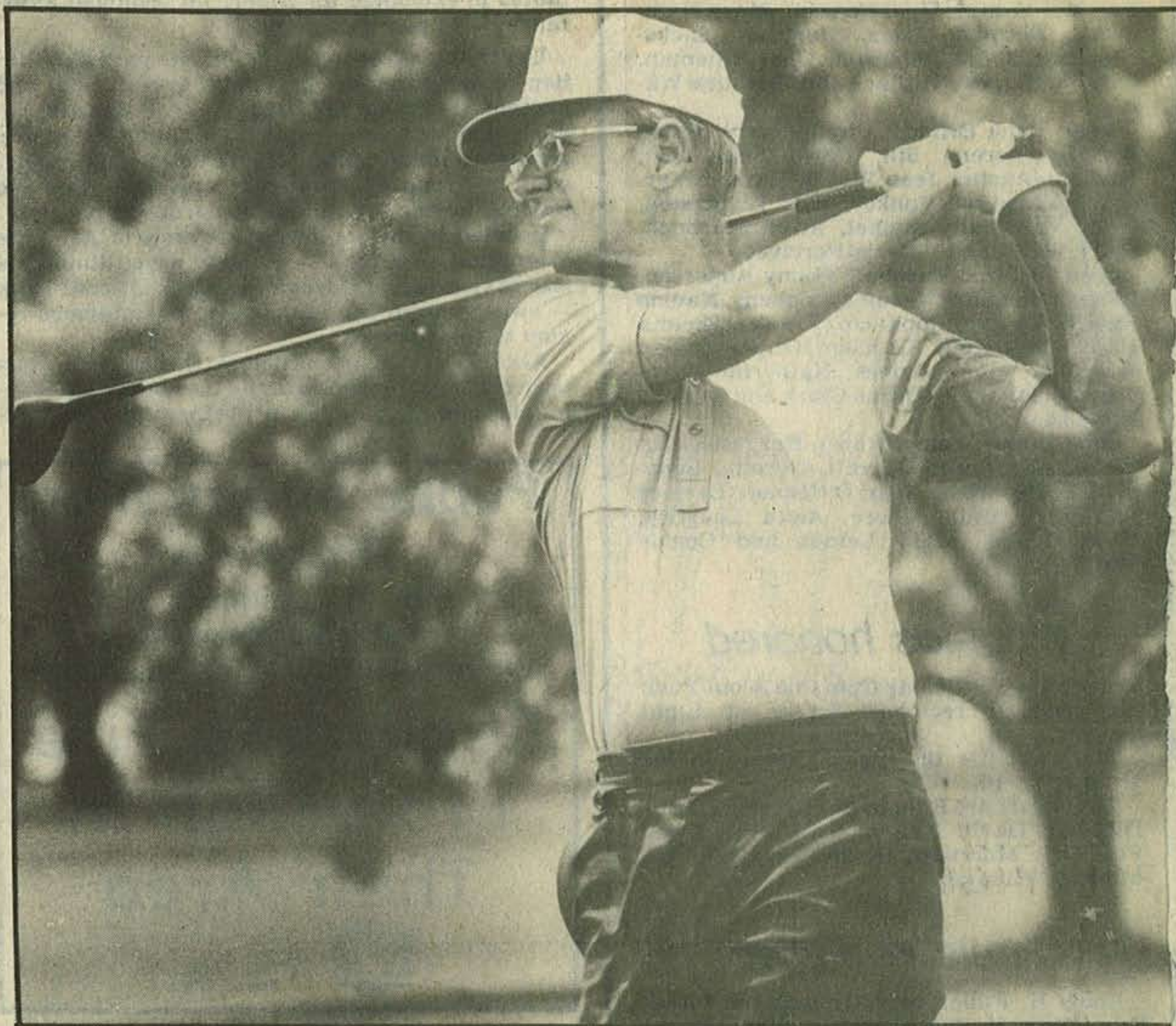
Keffer fought back though, taking advantage of another missed putt by Moore on the 11th hole.

Moore and Keffer hit well off the tee most of the day, but both ran into trouble on the 12th hole as they hit into the trees on the side of the fairway.

However, Keffer made the best of it, when his second shot from behind the trees nearly dropped in the hole after hitting the pin.

Keffer was able to even the score once again, sinking a 10-inch putt for a birdie on the hole.

The two golfers remained even for the next eight holes. And although Moore hit a long putt for a birdie on the 18th, Keffer stayed right with him with a birdie of his own to push the contest into sudden-death.



Coloradoan photo by Bob Gunter

State Match-Play champion Ron Moore watches drive during final round win over Don Keffer. Moore took 2-1 win on 21st hole for title

"When I made that putt on 18 I thought it was over," Moore said.

Maintaining the pace set throughout most of the afternoon, Moore and Keffer continued to play even golf for the first two holes of the sudden-death playoff.

An increased wind gave both golfers trouble with their tee shots on the par-three 20th hole. Both missed the green with their drives, but were able to get on with their second shots.

It looked as though they might stay even for yet another hole on the 21st when both golfers hit their second shot near the trap. But once again it was a missed putt — this time by Keffer — that spelled the difference. Moore

made par on the hole, while Keffer had to settle for a bogey.

"That final putt should have broken to the left, but it went right because of the wind," a disappointed Keffer said after the match. "I hit the putt just the way I wanted to, it just went the wrong way. I just didn't play well at all."

Moore's sentiments weren't the same at all. "I didn't want the finals to end that way, but I thought it would eventually come down to one of us missing a shot like that," he said. "I had such a difficult match this morning, and I played so well that by the time I got to the finals I was elated.

"It was such a high that I really didn't know what I was doing."