

Collin Clark hangs on to win boys championship



Collin Clark, 16, holds his FWJGA Boys City Junior Golf Championship trophy. The boys tournament co-director Chuck Birkhold is holding the permanent Marvin Leonard trophy, which has the names of all the former winners of the tournament, which began in 1936.,

With a seven-shot lead entering the final round, Collin Clark had set an ambitious goal of winning by 10 shots so he could beat the margin of his nine-shot high school tournament victory in March. But at the end of the 72-hole tournament, he was more than willing to accept his eventual one-shot margin to win the FWJGA's Boys City Junior Golf Championship. And he managed that shaky margin only after sinking a clutch five-foot putt for a triple-bogey seven on the final hole at Colonial Country Club.

The 16-year-old from Mansfield finished with an 11-over-par 81 over the 6,837-yard historic course (playing from the blue tees) and his four-day 294 total was one lower than Morillo's, who finished with a 75. Dennis Clark of Fort Worth entered the round tied with Morillo, and had wanted to aggressively pursue the title in his final year of eligibility. However, he just couldn't come up with the necessary shots and slipped to a 79 and 299 total to tie Sully Billingsley, 16, who shot a 77, for third. The lowest score in the 15-player Championship Flight on the hot, sunny day was a 74 by Conner Parish, 16. The flight had been cut after the first three rounds. Collin had carded a 69 at Meadowbrook G.C., a 70 at River Crest C.C. and a 74 at Mira Vista C.C.



Dustin Lewis might not have won the boys championship, but if there had been a contest for style, he would have won that with his knickers apparel.

When Collin Clark walked off the 18th green, he said he thought Jorge had won. "I didn't even know what my putt was for," he said. "Jorge deserved to win. He played a lot better than I did today."

Even though Morillo, 17, was four shots behind standing on the 18th tee, he had gained momentum after birdies on the par-4 15th and 17th holes. "When I was standing on that tee, I knew anything could happen, especially at Colonial," he said. "And then when he hit that tee shot, I said ..'Maybe'."

Collin had raised Morillo's hopes when his tee shot on 18 hooked into a hazard. Collin took a stroke penalty and dropped the ball in the rough. His low third shot under a tree almost rolled into another hazard on the left side, stopping a foot short of the water. Collin's pitch shot from there veered left and into a bunker in front of the green. His first blast failed to clear the trap and he had to try again. This time, he blasted to within five feet. Meanwhile, Morillo had left his second shot to the right of the green, but chipped to about three feet to add more pressure on Collin.

But Collin, who had led every round, hit the center of the cup with his seventh stroke and ended Morillo's hopes.

"This means a lot to me," Collin said after finally realizing he had won. "Three of the last five champions have been from Mansfield," he said, noting it will be great to have his name with them on the permanent Marvin Leonard trophy. It's also been quite a journey for Collin, who began playing golf when he was 10 and eventually opted to keep playing the sport rather than baseball. It was only a year ago, he said, when he began playing par golf.

However, he was disappointed with the way he played Thursday. "I didn't play well at all. I hit only four or five fairways and I was chipping and putting all the way around. I had two double bogeys and two triple bogeys." Morillo also had two double bogeys, but he offset some of the damage with three birdies. Collin didn't have any.

"I've played this tournament for six straight years," Morillo said. "It's a great tournament. Last year, I finished third and second this year." At least the Trophy Club resident is heading in the right direction.

Other winners in the 18-hole flights that finished at Colonial were Samuel Shyroc, 14, in the First Flight (74--318); Reagan Johnson, 16, (83--307) in the Second Flight and Kyle Summerville, 16, (84--330) in the Third Flight. Champions also were decided in the Fourth through Eighth flights and in the 9-hole and 6-hole divisions.