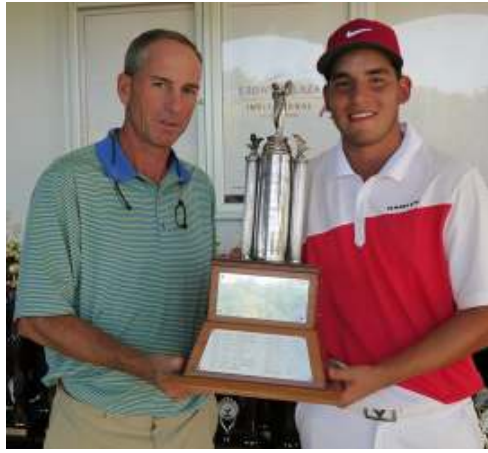


## Javier Manrique wins 2012 boys title with final-round 69 at Colonial C.C.



Javier Manrique drives off No. 17 at Colonial en route to a final-round 69.



Colonial C.C. head golf professional Dow Finsterwald Jr. presents the permanent trophy to the 2012 FWJGA Boys City Junior Golf Championship winner Javier Manrique at the awards ceremonies at Colonial on Thursday. Manrique shot a 1-under-par 70 for a 72-hole total of 282

Javier Manrique, 16, has lived in the North Texas area for only two and a half years and already has won a title that has eluded some of the area's best players.

Manrique held off challenges from Sean Walsh of Keller, Johnny Jones of Flower Mound

and Luke Neeley of Mansfield on Thursday, July 19, at Colonial Country Club to win the 2012 FWJGA Boys City Junior Golf Championship. Manrique rallied on the back nine with a 2-under 33 to finish with a 1-under-par 69 from the Blue tees (about 6,800 yards). His 72-hole total of 282 beat Jones, 16, by three shots. Neeley, last year's runner-up, shot a 70 and tied with Sean Walsh for third at 287.

The margin of victory might seem comfortable, but there was nothing comfortable about the final round for Manrique until the final putt dropped. Jones matched Manrique's 69, Neeley carded a 70 and Walsh, who got off to a blazing start but couldn't maintain the momentum, finished with a 73. There was a lot of drama before the scores were posted, though.

Manrique entered the final day with a one-shot lead over Walsh, three over Jones and four over Neeley. But the challengers quickly put the heat on Manrique. Walsh birdied the first three holes to pull in front by one. Jones birdied two of the first three holes and Neeley birdied the first two holes. Manrique birdied the second hole to help stave off the charging challengers. He made the turn at 1-over 36 after bogeys at five and seven while Walsh pulled even with a 35 on the front, taking bogeys on seven and nine.

Walsh's momentum was sapped somewhat when he was unable to take advantage of Manrique's three-putt bogey on 10 as he double-bogeyed. Neeley, who made the turn in 37, made another run with birdies on Nos. 10 and 11. However, Manrique regrouped and knocked back his challengers with birdies on Nos. 12 and 13 and closing with pars for his 2-under 33. Walsh finished with a 38, Jones a 36 and Neeley matched Manrique with a 33. Jones had an up-and-down back nine with three bogeys and two birdies, one coming when his ball dropped in the hole after he blasted out of the sand on the par-3 16th.

"It feels really good to win," said Manrique, who moved to Denton about two and a half years ago from Ibagub, Columbia. Though this was his third time in the tournament (second in the Championship Flight), he had never challenged for the title because of his final rounds. He finished fifth last year when he shot a 76, and was fourth in the First Flight in 2010 when he posted an 82 in the final round. "I was looking forward to a good round (this year)," he said. After the hot starts by his challengers, he said "I just tried to maintain my focus."

Neeley, who also finished third in 2010, said he entered the tournament believing this was his year to win. "I missed four puts of 10 feet or shorter on the back nine," he said. He also double-bogeyed the par-5 fifth when his ball seemingly trickled into the left rough. After failing to find the ball, though, he had to return to the tee and start over. "I could just as easily shot a 65. I played really, really well. Not that a 70 is that bad here, but it could have been better. I'm a little disappointed, but what held me back was the 76 I shot at Ridglea."

Jones said he "felt on top of the world" after birdies on two of the first three holes and then finding the fairway on the difficult par-4 fifth hole. He made the turn at 2-under, but his momentum-turning moment came on the par-5 11th when he bogeyed. "That was a big hole," he said, though he did rally to birdie the 12th. But bogeys on 14 and 17 slowed the comeback, despite the birdie on 16.

Walsh said after his hot three-birdie start that he just couldn't do much after that. He offset the birdies with three bogeys and made the turn in 35. Then the double-bogey on 10 kept him on his heels most of the back nine as he shot a 38.

Manrique said he began playing golf when he was about four and had a coach throughout his early years until moving from Columbia. "I told my coach I wanted to be a pro, and I worked really hard for him. I really hated to leave him." However, he said Liberty Christian School coach Larry Frank has been a big help. "He has been pushing me," he said.

Winning the First Flight by five shots was Brian Rogers, 16, of Trophy Club, who shot a 75 at Colonial; Connor Roberts, 18, of Keller won the Second Flight by a shot after finishing with an 81; Russell Schuljak, 15, of Mansfield took the Third Flight by four shots after a final-round 76. The fourth through 12th 18-hole flights finished at Diamond Oaks C.C. The 9-Hole Division played all four days at Z Boaz Golf Course. Winning the Championship Flight 12-13 division was Kelvin Lee, 12, of Keller. He beat Robert Collison, 13, of Fort Worth in the final match. Taking the top flight in the 7-11 division was Tucker Allen, 11, of Tolar. He beat Brendan Powers, 11, of Mansfield.