

Sheehan snags crown

1-under enough for Solanco grad to win Monday's event at Pilgrim's Oak

Playing in the third threesome of Monday's Lanco Lancaster Toyota Open, Connor Sheehan of Conestoga Country Club was the first golfer of the day to turn in a scorecard with a round under par.

What the 19-year-old Millersville University sophomore-to-be didn't know was that his 1-under 71 would be the only below-par round of the day and hold up for the win at Pilgrim's Oak Golf Club.

"I would say I'm happy with my round," Sheehan had said after turning in his card. "I was under par and that is always my goal, but there were a couple of shots out there I wish I had back."

Sheehan, who finished in second — seven shots behind David Denlinger — during last month's Lanco Amateur at Crossgates Golf Club, wound up two shots ahead of Lancaster Country Club's John Barry and three shots in front of Lancaster Country Club's Kenneth Phillips on Monday.

Four golfers were tied at 3-over-par 75.

"It's neat," said Sheehan, who is a biology major at Millersville. "I really wanted to win the Amateur. That was a huge disappointment although second is cool. This is good though."

Sheehan is the first amateur to win the Open since Brixton Albert of Foxchase in 2012. A total of 44 golfers competed in Monday's event.

"I really didn't think (1-under) would hold up," Sheehan said. "There are so many good players in the field. I thought it would be a lot lower. I thought there might be at least a playoff. The winds were tough and I think that may have tripped a lot of people up."

Sheehan, who grew up in nearby Quarryville and attended Solanco High School, where he twice qualified for the PIAA Class AAA state golf tournament, played a steady round of golf

He made par on the first five holes before a birdie on the par5, 515-yard No. 6 and par on No. 7. A bogey on the par-3 eighth and another birdie of a par-5 on No. 9 helped Sheehan close out the front nine at 1-under 35.



SUBMITTED PHOTO **Connor Sheehan, left, is congratulated by tournament chairman John Miller after winning the Lanco Lancaster Toyota Open on Monday at Pilgrim's Oak Golf Club.**

"Luckily, the driver worked for me," Sheehan said. "That will usually determine how I do because there are a lot of tough tee shots here. If the driver is on, usually it's pretty good. I was just worried about hitting greens and getting putts. I know I can make putts, I just have to get to them."

Sheehan opened the back nine with five consecutive pars before a bogey on the par-4, 434-yard No. 15. He made par on both 16 and 17 before finishing his round with a birdie on the par-5, 498-yard No. 18.

"I had a lot of pars," Sheehan, who finished 10th in last year's Open.

"That's a little boring, but it works."

Barry proved to be the closest challenger. He carded a 1-over 37 on the front nine with a birdie on No. 6 combined with back-to-back bogeys on Nos. 8 and 9.

"I hit it in good and tight for a chance for eagle on six," Barry said. "I had a putt from five or six feet and missed that. That would have given me a little more momentum I think."

A third-straight bogey came on the par-4 10th hole before Barry reeled off a string of seven consecutive pars. He finished with a birdie on No. 18.

"It was solid," Barry said. "I hit it well all day. I fell asleep in the middle of the round and had a couple of bogeys in a row. I had opportunities for birdies and an eagle, but didn't make many of those putts. Overall, it was pretty vanilla. A good ball-striking day. Could have been better."