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## Windham's Greenleaf reaches match-play at U.S. Juniors

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STRATHAM, N.H. – Connor Greenleaf let the world know yesterday – with his putter – that he’s going to be a tough out here in match play ... No matter the opponent or the situation.

Greenleaf, with a 3-over par 75, accomplished goal No. 1 here at the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship, rather comfortably with a 5-shot cushion in the No. 36 seed.

His 74-75 – 149 proved rock-solid, but mostly unspectacular.

But when he rattled home a 20-foot birdie on 18 yesterday, heads turned and all were at attention.

Greenleaf should have been under panic stage red when he stepped to the 18th tee. Coming off a confidence-crumbling double-bogey, he had to wonder if all the previous work toward punching his match-play ticket would be lost in a two-hole collapse.

Instead, the 16-year-old from Windham kicked in the door with a birdie, making the final wait for the pairings a lot more palatable.

“That birdie was absolutely key,” said Greenleaf, who faces off with Victor Wiggins of North Carolina this morning in the round of 64 patch-play opener.

“I’m part of the final 64, and that was the goal. And I’m in the middle of the pack,” said Greenleaf. “Once you get there, and you’re not one of the 60-something seeds, chances are as good as any to move along. In match play, anything can happen. You’re not playing the course. You’re not playing 100 or so people. You’re playing one person.

“I don’t consider myself a match-play guy, but it should be all about making pars out there, and I’m all about making pars right now.”

Greenleaf went out with a 37 on the front nine, his only birdie coming at a perfect time on the ninth hole.

Two holes earlier, he had missed a two-footer for par. But the Windham High junior made a nice swing on the par-3 eighth hole – two-putting for par from about 20 feet – and he rolled home about a 12-footer on the ninth to remove any wobble from his game that might have been growing.

“My third straight 37, and I was very happy about that heading to 10, pretty comfortably,” he said.

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