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Coles takes Open lead

Sizzling early round finish produces 3-under 69

From staff and wire reports

SPRINGFIELD, N.J. — Janet Coles today put herself in position to challenge for the 40th U.S. Women's Open championship, firing a 3-under-par 69 to take the early second-round lead at Baltusrol Golf Club.

Golf

Coles, 30, who grew up in Aptos, finished the halfway point of the tournament at 141, 3-under-par, while other top contenders were still out on the course. Coles today played steady — and consistent — through the first nine holes, making nine pars. Then she got it rolling.

Coles, a 1972 Watsonville High grad who now lives in Carmel, birdied the par-4 12th and 13th holes to go 2-under for the tournament, then birdied the par-3 15th to take the

lead. Coles made three closing pars to post the score for the rest of the field to shoot at.

Thursday, Coles opened with birdies on the first two holes, stumbled with bogeys at the fourth and fifth holes, but birdied the par-4 sixth for a 1-under 35 on the front nine. Bogeys at the 14th and 15th holes slowed down Coles, but she birdied the par-4 16th for even-par 72.

Coles is coming off the worst season of her nine-year career, last year having played in only eight tournaments after suffering a case of bronchial pneumonia, which hospitalized for a week in April. She did not play again for the next 24 weeks, until the San Jose Classic in September.

This year, however, the former

UCLA basketball player has come back strong, having won \$38,946 to rank No. 33 on the LPGA money list, with four Top 10 finishes and a best finish of tied for third place in the United Virginia Bank Classic in May.

Juli Inkster's hopes for a U.S. Open title started with a birdie on the first hole Thursday. Then they ended with a 10 on the par-4 fourth hole.

Inkster, the 25-year-old Santa Cruz product who now lives in Los Altos, had nine bogeys in her round, a 14-over-par 86, and probably will miss the 36-hole cut. Inkster, who two weeks ago won the LPGA's Lady Keystone Open, shot a 9-over 45 on the front side, then a 5-over 41 on the back.

At the other end of the spectrum



Janet Coles

Thursday, Janet Anderson, who won the 1982 U.S. Women's Open at Sacramento's Del Paso Country Club, capped a 2-under-par 70 by ramming home a 20-foot birdie putt on the final hole and grabbed a share first-round lead in the with red-hot Nancy Lopez and 24-year-old Kathy Baker.