

Coles close, Lopez favored

By The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, N.J. — Kathy Baker has never led a tournament after three rounds, and Judy Clark has never won one as a professional.

And Janet Coles can still win one this weekend.

They all will go after the 40th U.S. Women's Open title today with one major obstacle standing in their way in the final round — Nancy Lopez.

Coles, the 1972 Watsonville High grad who lives in Carmel, stayed in the thick of the championship Saturday, shot a 1-under-par 71. That gives Coles, who is bouncing back this season after a back-luck 1984 season, a three-day total of 212. She goes into today's final round only two shots behind Baker and one shot behind Lopez and Clark.

Coles, who has won \$407,967 since

joining the LPGA Tour in 1977, suffered bronchial pneumonia and missed 24 of the final 25 weeks of the season last year. The most recent of two career victories for the former Aptos resident came in 1983.

Baker, also a non-winner as a professional, fired a 4-under-par 68 Saturday to take a one-stroke lead over Lopez and the record-tying Clark, who had an Open record 7-under-par 65.

Lopez will clearly be the one they all have to beat as she seeks her 33rd career victory.

"I feel no pressure," Lopez said. "I think if I play my game, think smart and be patient, it will be my turn. One shot isn't much."

Baker, who took the lead on the final hole by rolling in a 15-foot birdie, said she played a very consis-

tent round and noted that her putts started dropping on the back nine.

"I don't think I have ever led a tournament after three rounds," said Baker. "I will just go out and take tomorrow like a new day and do the best I can."

Baker had five birdies and a bogey on the back nine and had an Open record 54-hole total of 6-under-par 210 on the par-72, 6,274-yard upper course at the Baltusrol Golf Club.

The old 54-hole record of 5 under par was set in 1980 by Amy Alcott.

An overnight thunderstorm had soaked the course and Clark said it helped lower scores on Saturday.

"I think we caught the course as easy as it is going to play," she said. "I think after the rain last night and no wind today the greens were really holding."