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Australian Geoff Nicholas chips during the Canadian National Amputee Open

Nicholas nabs 5th Amputee Open

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For a guy who once was able to tame the Tiger, it should come as no surprise that Geoff Nicholas was able to defend his title with ease.

Nicholas, the pride of Sydney, Australia, shot a two under-par 69 yesterday at Southwood Golf & Country Club to capture the Canadian National Amputee Open for a fifth time, by 11 shots over Robert MacDermott of Edmonton.

After an even-par front nine, Nicholas was two under on the back to finish the tournament at four-over 217.

MacDermott finished second at 228, Dan Cox was 232 and Rick Craft rounded out the top four at 233.

"I started out really well and on the 13th, I nearly had a hole-in-one — I hit it to within two feet," said Nicholas, whose birth defect (Thalalimode) in his right leg didn't prevent him from picking up the sport of golf at the age of 13. "I putted really well."

Nicholas, whose clubs arrived two days after he did, will compete in the United States National Amputee

Open next weekend and late month will attend the first stage of the European PGA Tour's qualification school in London, England.

"I went a couple of years ago and missed out by two (strokes)," Nicholas, who has played in more than 30 Australian PGA Tour events, said. "In 1996 I played in the Australian Open and made the cut. Greg Norman won it and I actually led Tiger Wood in the first round (77 to 79)."

Thrilled

Tournament chairman Warrington was thrilled to see that all 88 of the golfers that started the tournament on Wednesday completed all 54 holes in the tournament.

"Not one amputee, regardless of the level of disability, got blisters or anything bailed out of them that's incredible," said Warrington, who has played in 40 or 50 amputee events in his career. "It's the first time that the whole field has finished so I'm just delighted. It's so wonderful. Just think about the persistence of those players in the 30th hole, how they hung in there. It's unbelievable."