



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

PICTURED ARE the all Buckeye 8 Golf Teams. Kneeling, from left, are first team selections Caden Myers (St. Clairsville), Zach Keylor (St. Clairsville), Brice Holler (St. Clairsville), Taylor Shane (Martins Ferry) and Andrew Chlon (Martins Ferry). Standing, from left, are second-team selections Chase Stuckey (Martins Ferry), Jared Burghy (St. Clairsville), Adam Jeffries (St. Clairsville), Drew Horn (Harrison Central) and Trevor Mudrak (Union Local). Additional images may be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com

OVAC Golf Tournament set to tee off Tuesday at Oglebay

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

The first Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Champions for the 2011-12 school year will be crowned this week.

Along with the first champions, when the golf tournament unfolds at Oglebay Park, beginning Tuesday, the conference will also crown its first champions in the 5-class system.

All five classes will compete separately, meaning five golf champions will be crowned since the minimum number of schools was met for each division.

On Tuesday, the 1A and 2A schools will play at Crispin Golf Center, while the 4A schools will compete at Speidel's Jones Course. The 18-hole, stroke-play tournament will get under way at 9:30 a.m.

Thursday's action will include the 3A schools playing at Crispin and 5A battling it out at Speidel.

A new champion is assured in both 3A and 4A. St. Clairsville is the reigning champion in 3A, but the Red Devils now compete in 4A under the system, while Wheeling Park will seek to become the first 5A champion after winning the last three 4A titles.

St. Clairsville enters this week's 4A tournament as a heavy favorite. The Red Devils, who won the Buckeye 8 title convincingly on Friday, return all five of their starters from last season and have shown steady improvement.

"These kids are really confident in their games right now," St. C. coach Rick Oberdick said. "We're looking forward and excited for the OVAC."

The Red Devils also feature the last two Class 3A medalists. Zach Keylor won in 2009 and Caden Myers claimed the title last season. Senior Brice Holler — a returning state qualifier — will also be in the mix after he posted an impressive, 71, to win share Buckeye 8 medalist honors with Keylor.

Juniors Jared Burghy and Adam

Jeffries have also put forth impressive seasons.

"It's tough to predict (who will be our leader) because any of them could do it on any given day," Oberdick said.

"These kids play so well together, they're friends and they genuinely root for each other."

The Red Devils have just two losses this season. Martins Ferry, which is expected to contend for the 3A title, and Wheeling Park, which is expected to win the 5A, upended the Red Devils this season.

"We're prepared," Oberdick said. "We played at Speidel last week, but the weather was

terrible. Meadowbrook is back in our division and they beat us two years ago, so we're going to have to be ready for them and we'd like to beat them."

The Red Devils will receive a challenge from: Union Local, Harrison Central, Meadowbrook, Oak Glen, Weir High, Edison, East Liverpool, Steubenville and Buckeye Local.

The team hoping to take over the Red Devils' vacated spot in 3A is the Martins Ferry Purple Riders, who've been impressive all season.

Coach Joe Kosar's team has been on the rise since the middle of last season and appears primed for a big break through. A victory would give Ferry only its second OVAC golf title in school history. The other came 20 years ago in 1991.

"I like our chances this year a lot better than they've been in the past," Kosar said. "Crispin is a little more player friendly than Jones. There are some good golfers and some good teams, so we have to show up in the right frame of mind (on Thursday)."

The Purple Riders are led by junior standout Taylor Shane and Andrew Chlon, who's been a steady player for several years.

Rounding out the Riders' entrants are Chase Stuckey, Doug Robey and Katelyn Bliss.

"We need to bring our 'A'

game," Kosar said. "What I like about this group of kids is that they go out, play and practice for the love of the game. They've made themselves better by all of the hard work and dedication they've put in. Any one of the kids are capable of scoring at any time, which has been a huge part of our success."

Battling the Riders will be: Barnesville, Bellaire, Bridgeport, Buckeye Trail, Fort Frye, Magnolia, Monroe Central and Tyler Consolidated.

Wheeling Park appears primed to notch its 10th OVAC golf title. Coach Don Headley's team has been impressive all season with brilliant sophomore Thad Obecney leading the way.

The balance of the 5A division consists of: Beaver Local, Indian Creek, Cambridge, Brooke, John Marshall, University, Parkersburg South and Morgantown.

In Class 1-A, Madonna is the defending champion and once again the favorite to claim the crown, which would be the Blue Dons' fifth in history.

A new individual medalist is guaranteed in the small-school division. Grant Epply of Rosecrans won last year, but the Bishops dropped out of the OVAC last spring. Andrew Gobleck of Madonna, who's lost the last two medalist crowns in a playoff, is the top returning individual.

Madonna's Nick Battista is also a returning all-OVAC player.

Class 2-A a season ago came down to one stroke before River outlasted Fort Frye. Many believe this year could be just as close. Linsly, Wheeling Central, Steubenville Central and Toronto are expected to contend for the crown.

This golf tournament will also serve as the OVAC debut of Clay-Battelle.

Steubenville Central's Ryan Fischer and River's Austin Curtis are both returning members of the all-conference team. Shadyside's Adam Stupak is another individual to keep an eye on.

Wellsville completes the Class 2-A field.

SPORTS

OVAC Golf



LEFT: Martins Ferry's Taylor Shane tees off on the par 5, 12th hole during the 3-A OVAC Golf Tournament held at Oglebay Park's Crispin Course Thursday afternoon. He was the medalist with a round of 76. **BOTTOM:** Martins Ferry's Chase Stuckey tees off on the par 4, 11th hole. He earned a spot on the all tournament team.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

PURPLE POWER

• Ferry golfers capture OVAC 3-A title

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

Coming into the OVAC Class 3A Golf Championship, Martins Ferry had been proclaimed the favorite.

However, when Purple Riders' head coach Joe Kosar and his talented squad arrived at Oglebay Park's Crispin Center Thursday morning, they were greeted with something they'd not seen all season.

That being weather that was more like St. Andrew's and the British Open as chilly temperatures, swirling winds and steady drizzle moved into the Ohio Valley and held down scoring on the usually player-friendly par 71 layout.

"Weather can be the great equalizer,"

Kosar said. "The conditions were horrible and I didn't see anyone give up. On a dry course, our team tends to play well."

Not the weather, nor any of the other teams were going to stand in the way of the Purple Riders, who breezed to their second OVAC title in school history. Their last championship came in 1991 and Eric Coe - a member of that team - was on hand and congratulated each member of the Riders' team after he received his championship plaque.

"I'm speechless," Kosar said. "This couldn't happen to a greater bunch of kids."



These kids play for the love of the game and because of their dedication is why we're in the position we're in right now."

As the scores were trickling into the clubhouse and being posted, Kosar had the nervous look, but his five players - Taylor Shane, Andrew Chlon, Chase Stuckey, Doug

See **PURPLE**. Page B2



Continued from Page B1

Robey and Kaitlyn Bliss — turned the nervousness into excitement. The Riders finished with a 318, which was 15 shots clear of runner-up Buckeye Trail.

"Everybody talks about this number one and number two stuff, but that's just where you play them," Kosar said. "We really don't have a number one or two. I have to look at where the kids are because some of them are more comfortable. The numbering isn't what it's all cracked up to be or what everyone tries to make it."

Bridgeport — which is still a relatively new program — finished third with 357.

The Riders placed three players on the all-tournament team and had the medalist and runner-up medalist.

"A big reason for our success has been how steady our number one, two and three guys have been," Kosar said. "Four, five and six at anytime have stepped up and played an important part in the winning process."

Junior Taylor Shane — who had a strong summer on the Top Flite Tour — recorded his first individual title in the conference when he overcame a rough stretch on the back nine to finish with a 5-over 76.

"This feels great," Shane said. "I was trying to hold it together on the back. Finally, the weather got better toward the end (of the round). I was just trying to grind through it and keep plugging away."

Shane — who started his round on the first hole — made the turn at 1-over and then proceeded to shoot his next four holes at 3 over par, including a double on the par 3, 13th.

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pars off some not-so-good shots," Shane said. "I was able to get it back together and it paid off."

Junior Andrew Chlon finished the round with a 78, but was tied with Buckeye Trail's Justin Wilson for runner-up medalist. The pair then went to the Par 5, eighth for a playoff hole.

"With the weather and the conditions the way they were, I am happy," Chlon said.

After a rough second shot, Chlon hit a 4-iron within five feet and drained the putt for birdie and the runner-up finish.

"I was able to bounce back with a good shot and made the putt," Chlon said. "The team played well. Something like this has been a long time coming (for our team). We needed something like this to gain some confidence. Winning this championship feels really good."

Also earning a spot on the all-tournament team was the Riders' Chase Stuckey, who checked in with a round of 80, which was good enough for a three-way tie for fifth.

Doug Robey and Kaitlyn Bliss both finished with rounds of 84.

"Even though golf is an individual sport, this group is all we," Kosar said. "Yes, these kids want to score well and play well, but you never see that during the course of the match because they're all pulling for each other."

The balance of the all-OVAC team includes: Barnesville's Chris Doty (79), Buckeye Trail's Jessi Roe (80) and Tyler Consolidated's Dalton Wells (80).

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OBECCNY

(Continued from Page 19)

The last-hole happenings left Obecnny with mixed emotions.

"I don't know," he said. "I missed some putts, but Cole doubled the last hole. I kinda feel bad for him, but it's golf. It didn't matter that much for me. I don't root for people to do bad, but it happens."

It was the fourth straight OVAC golf crown for coach Don Headley's Patriots, who wound up with four of the five members of the all-tournament team.

Joining Obecnny (75) and Hand (75) was Jacob Carpenter (82) and Eli Lambie (83). In a sign of Wheeling Park's dominance Thursday, Scott Hand's 87 didn't count (they score the top four), but if it had, he would have tied for eighth overall.

"They're just crazy good right now," Headley said. "It's awesome. I'm glad to have the front-row seat."

University's Eric Wirth, who tied Lambie at 83, was the other member of the all-tourney team.

"With the weather conditions, I thought if I had four scores in the 80s, I'd be pretty satisfied with that," said Hawks coach Bill Hines, who actually received just that.

University has beaten Park once this year in five

meetings, so the Hawks knew what they were up against from the chilly, rainy start.

"This being their home course is an advantage for them," Hines added. "I think the weather played a factor for our team. We haven't experienced that this year. We've been fortunate in that area this year. I just don't think we handled it very well."

Cambridge, led by an 87 from Ben Standiford, was third at 356, followed by Hunter Woods (84), Tara Hanson (87) and Morgantown at 366.

In the end, it was a two-man race.

Both Hand and Obecnny shot 38s through nine holes. Obecnny birdied his 10th, bogeyed his 11th and 12th, and parred out.

Hand didn't make a birdie until his 15th hole, parred his 16th, chipped in on his 17th for birdie, giving him a one-stroke lead heading to the final tee.

"He knew what he had to do; he's just pushing, trying to get the score in," Headley said. "Cole's one of the most competitive kids that I know. He's as competitive as Thadd. Every match that we have out here, those two battle each other, along with battling the seniors (Lambie and Carpenter)."

"It really is nice to have that much competitiveness on a team."

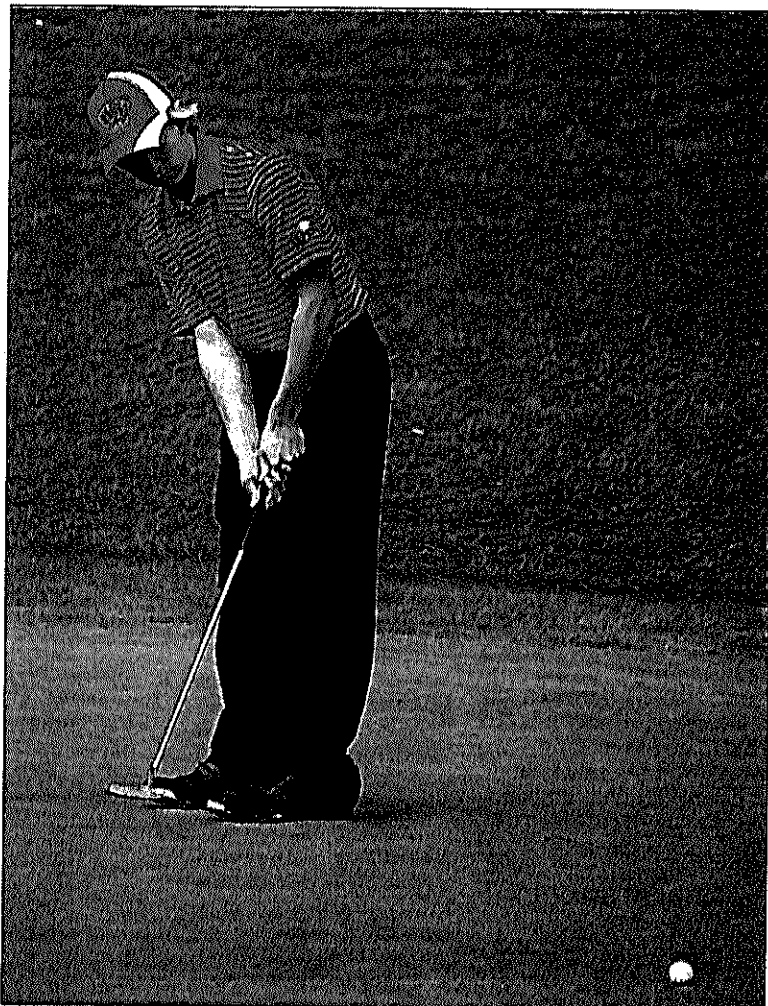


Photo by Jim Elliott

Wheeling Park's Thadd Obecnny II watches his putt during Thursday's OVAC Class 5A Golf Championship.

Park's Obecnny Edges Hand For Top Spot

Patriots cruise to 5A crown

By JIM ELLIOTT
Staff Writer

WHEELING — As a team, the Wheeling Park Patriots took all the drama out of Thursday's OVAC Class 5A Golf Tournament on Oglebay's Jones Course, as they blew away the field with a 314 — 32 strokes better than second-place University.

Individually, it dripped like the rain — all the way to the bitter end.

Freshman Cole Hand stood at the No. 17 tee, his last hole, with knowledge of a one-shot lead on teammate Thadd Obecnny II with medalist honors on the line. A par on the 456-yard, Par 4 was all he needed to card the lowest score.

And then his drive hit the hill and stayed there in the mushy conditions. His second shot stayed right. His ensuing chip reached the green but in an unfavorable spot.

"Then I got aggressive with the putt, trying to make it for the win, then I missed the comeback," he lamented.

Obecnny watched the whole thing.

"It probably got in my head a little bit," Hand said.

With that, Obecnny's 3-over-par 74, which had stood in the clubhouse for nearly 20 minutes, proved to be the day's low round, as he repeated as the OVAC's highest-class medalist. They were the only two players in the 40-man field to shoot in the 70s.

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St. C. claims another title

By SETH STASKEY
Times Leader Sports Editor

The St. Clairsville Red Devils are clearing some additional wall space inside their gymnasium.

The Red Devils are bringing home yet another Ohio Valley Athletic Conference championship pennant.

St. Clairsville's talented golf team made the 4-A tournament held at Oglebay Park's Spiedel Golf Club on the Jones Course a runaway. En route to claiming the school's 23rd OVAC links title and second in a row, the Red Devils, who boast just one senior, fired a solid 322, which was 18 shots better than runnerup East Liverpool, which produced the tournament's individual champion in Blake Prince, who posted a 78.

While the Potters had the individual champion, the Red Devils placed three players on the all-OVAC team and had their fourth scorer miss by just a single shot.

'We don't have a number one, four or a five or anything.'

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"We barely squeaked through last year and we left here kind of disappointed in our play, but I am not disappointed at all today,"

said Red Devils' head coach Rick Oberdick. "We had a good team effort and I think the conditions themselves were worth a couple of strokes because the rough was thick, the wind started gusting and the tees were set well back."

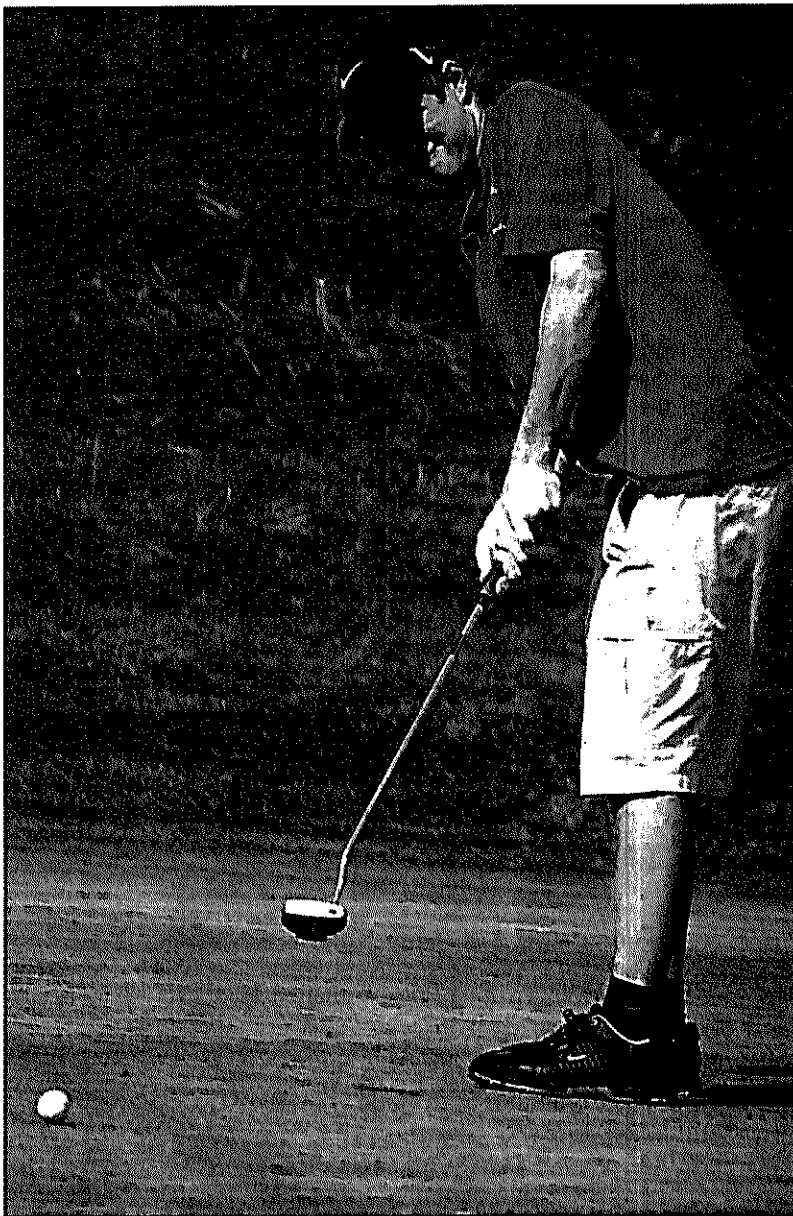
The Red Devils, who won the Buckeye 8 title last week, got a pick-me-up from junior lefty Adam Jeffries and classmate Jared Burghy, who were playing in the fourth and fifth spots, respectively.

"We don't have a number one, four or a five or anything," Oberdick conceded. "They're all ones and they show that by how they rotate. It's nice because when one of your guys isn't playing as well as he could be, you've always got those other guys coming in."

Jeffries, who had a tremendous summer of golf on the Top Flite Tour, turned in the low St. C. round of the day with a 79. He found himself in a playoff against Meadowbrook's Matt Miller for runner-up medalist.

After the round, however, Jeffries was kicking himself for posting a double bogey on his final hole of the tournament as well as his first two holes of the entire event.

See, ST.C., Page B2



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Jared Burghy putts on the 8th green during Tuesday's OVAC Class 4-A Golf Tournament at Oglebay Park's Spiedel Golf Club. Additional images may be found at cu.timesleaderonline.com

Ferry Claims 3A Championship

Title is first since 1991 tourney

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Photo by Seth Staskey

Magnolia's Tyler Myers watches a shot during Thursday's 3A tournament at Oglebay.

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Continued from Page B1

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The duo went and played 18 for a second time and both posted a par and headed back to the 18th tee for a third time overall and the second in the playoff.

Both players found the fairway off the tee, but Jeffries second shot found the bunker and he couldn't get up and down for a par. Miller posted a par for the runnerup plaque.

Burghy, who began his round on the backside of the course, went out at 45. However, he scorched the front side, posting a 1-under 35 for a round of 80.

"My driver was good, but I had one really bad hole and took an eight, but after that I was pretty much lights out," Burghy said. "There have been times in the past where I've not recovered well from a bad hole, but this time I was able to come back."

Senior Brice Holler finished with a solid 81 and earned all-conference.

Junior Zach Keylor, who won the OVAC title as a freshman, just missed all-conference accolades with a round of 82.

However, he produced the shot of the day on the 148-yard Par 3, fourth. Keylor, who struggled for much of the round by his own admission, sank a hole-in-one on the hole, which calls for the players to tee off well above the hole and features a sizeable pond.

The pin was placed in the back left and the ball landed just beyond the cup and trickled into the hole for Keylor's first-ever ace.

"I was shocked because I didn't even realize it went in the hole," Keylor said. "I had to ask (my playing partners) if it actually went in. I just yelled be the club when the ball was in the air, and apparently, it was the club. It was pretty exciting."

The Devils' fifth was defending OVAC Class 3A champion Caden Myers. He turned in a solid round of 85, which would have been the best on six of the 10 teams in the field.

East Liverpool's Joey Cline and Steubenville's Mike Petrides each checked in with a round of 81.

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● Wheeling

Continued from Page B1

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Wheeling Park blows away 5-A field

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St. C. Rolls to Class 4-A Title

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Please See **ROLLS**, Page 20



Photo by Seth Staskey
St. Clairsville's Zach Keylor tracks a tee shot Tuesday.

ROLLS

(Continued from Page 19)

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solid 81 and earned all-conference.

Junior Zach Keylor, who won the OVAC title as a freshman, just missed all-conference accolades with a round of 82.

However, he produced the shot of the day on the 170-yard Par 3, No. 4. Keylor, who struggled for much of the round by his own admission, sank a hole-in-one, which calls for the players to tee off well above the hole and features a sizeable pond.

The pin was placed in the back left and the ball landed just beyond the cup and trickled into the hole for Keylor's first ace.

"I was shocked because I didn't even realize it went in the hole," Keylor said. "I had to ask (my playing partners) if it actually went in. I just yelled 'be the club' when the ball was in the air, and apparently, it was the club. It was pretty exciting."

The Devils' fifth was defending OVAC Class 3A champion Caden Myers. He turned in a solid round of 85, which would have been the best on six of the 10 teams in the field.

East Liverpool's Joey Cline and Steubenville's Mike Petrides each checked in with a round of 81.

● Madonna

Continued from Page B1

Andrew Gobleck was the medalist with a 74, six shots better than teammate and runner-up Michael Rogers.

Rogers won the runner-up title by shooting a par on Hole No. 10 to edge out Beallsville's John Dietrich.

Along with Gobleck and Rogers, teammates Nicklas Battista (81) and Alex Colantonio (82) gave Weirton Madonna four of the five All-Conference Team members.

Class AA

Taking a look at the OVAC All-Conference Team, you won't find one member of the Steubenville Catholic golf team.

That's alright, the Crusaders will settle for the team trophy instead.

Steubenville Catholic won its eighth golf championship and first since 2008.

"Last year we played

well but we only finished fourth," Steubenville Catholic coach Rocky Augustine said.

Steubenville Catholic carded a 324, beating Wheeling Central and Linsly by six strokes.

Fischer led the way with a 76, while Morelli shot a 79. Augustine's two sophomores, Mike Manfresca and Jason Bensus, shot an 80 and 89, respectively.

David Bertoia, a senior playing in his first season, also shot an 89.

The medalist was Toronto's Matt Barcus, shooting an even-par 71.

The rest of the All-Tournament team is Toronto's John-Michael Romey (74), River's Austin Curtis (75), Wheeling Central's Justin Leonard (75), and Shadyside's Adam Stupak.

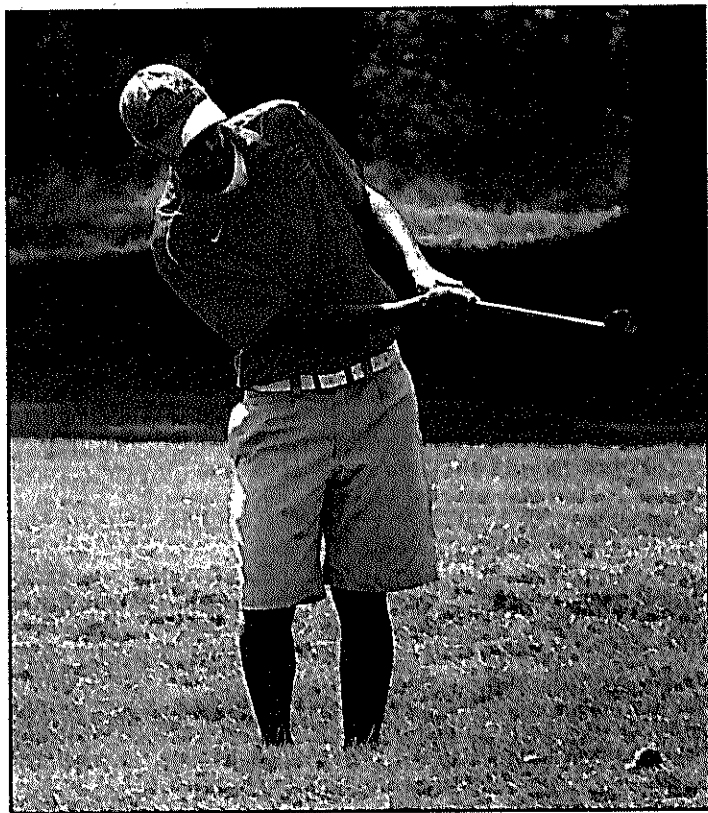


Photo: JOSH STROPE

SHADYSIDE'S ADAM Stupak watches his chip shot during Tuesday's OVAC Class 2-A Golf Tournament.

Madonna, Steubenville Catholic win in A, 2-A

By **JOSH STROPE**
For The Times Leader

The Weirton Madonna golf team can officially be listed as a dynasty after winning its third straight OVAC Class A championship.

The only question remaining: How many can win the Blue Dons win in a row?

Tuesday at Oglebay's Crispin Golf Course, Weirton Madonna won the championship by 28 strokes on second place Conotton Valley with a 317.

"I'm very proud of the guys," Weirton Madonna coach T.J. Branzazio said. "We are not playing up to our capabilities yet. It's coming and they know they have to work on some things. It's a good win but we know we just have to improve a little bit."

"I wish I could say (the recent success) has been me, but it's the kids. We have some great kids with 19 kids out in our program, we got two seniors and the rest freshmen and sophomores. We have eight members of Williams Country Club of the 19 so we have kids that are golfers. They aren't big kids but they come out and they work. And they are working at it in the spring, too. It's not just a fall sport for them."

It was a total team effort for the Blue Dons if there ever was one.

See, **MADONNA**, Page B2



OVAC Crowns Three



Photos by Josh Strobe

Left: Steubenville Catholic's Mitchell Morelli looks to get on the green Tuesday afternoon at Oglebay's Crispin Course. Right: Class A medalist Andrew Gobleck, of Madonna, works from the fairway.

Blue Dons, Crusaders Bring Home Gold

By JOSH STROPE
Staff Writer

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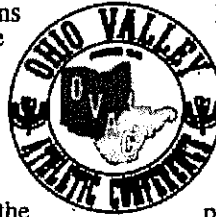
shooting a par on Hole No. 10 to edge Beallsville's John Dietrich.

Along with Gobleck and Rogers, teammates Nicklas Battista (81) and Alex Colantonio (82) gave Madonna four of the five All-Conference Team members.

"They held their composure," Brancazio said. "They weren't playing well early but they kept it together and knew where they were. They got to a point and then made pars the rest of the way."

Gobleck didn't look like he was having any problems.

After losing in a playoff for medalist



Please See GOLD, Page 20

GOLD

(Continued from Page 19) honors last season, the Blue Dons senior came out firing this time around.

"Overall, I thought I did really good but there are still some shots I left out there, some putts I should have made," Gobleck said. "I'm still happy with how I finished. I can't get mad with being the individual medalist."

"(As a team) we were in a little slump before and none of us were real happy with the way we were playing, I wasn't too happy with the way I was playing. We couldn't get anything going but this will give us momentum going toward the state qualifiers."

Now that the Blue Dons have run away with one title, they can start looking toward repeating for another.

"In the region that we are in with the states, with Williamstown and Parkersburg Catholic, we are

going to have to play better to go to states again and repeat," Brancazio said.

"They are just going to have to work on their short game and I think we are getting there. We have five matches left against good competition, and I think that will prepare us for the region."

Class AA

Taking a look at the OVAC All-Conference Team, you won't find one member of the Steubenville Catholic golf team.

That's alright, the Crusaders will settle for the team trophy instead.

Steubenville Catholic won its eighth golf championship and first since 2008.

"Last year we played well but we only finished fourth," Steubenville Catholic coach Rocky Augustine said. "We lost by a few strokes, but I think that was due to our inexperience."

"I knew that Mitchell (Morelli) and Ryan (Fischer) could hold the team together. They are our seniors and they both shot very well. Our sophomores, last year's freshmen, played very well (Tuesday). I think the experience paid off for them. I told them all week that they were going to have to shoot 320 to win and we did."

Steubenville Catholic carded a 324, beating Wheeling Central and Linsly by six strokes.

Fischer led the way with a 76, while Morelli shot a 79. Augustine's two sophomores, Mike Manfreda and Jason Bensus, shot an 80 and 89, respectively.

David Bertoia, a senior playing in his first season, also shot an 89.

"I was real confident that we had a good chance of winning this thing, but early in the morning, I went around and visited

with the kids, and watched each of them for a few holes and it wasn't going real well," Augustine said. "I started to get really disheartened and felt like we were letting this slip away from us."

"So I let them go and I didn't go back to revisit them and just and waited for scores to come in. They all rebounded and rebounded well."

The Crusaders were hitting the greens, which was key on a day where putting seemed to play tricks with everyone. Getting on early allowed the Crusaders to two-putt their way to an OVAC crown.

The medalist was Toronto's Matt Barcus, shooting an even-par 71. The rest of the All-Tournament team is Toronto's John-Michael Romey (74), River's Austin Curtis (75), Wheeling Central's Justin Leonard (75), and Shady-side's Adam Stupak.