

# Central claims 3A golf crown

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**WHEELING** — Not even a new class could slow down the Wheeling Central golf program.

After claiming back-to-back titles in Class 2A, the Maroon Knights bumped up to Class 3A for this school year and simply picked up where they left off.

Wheeling Central — on the strength of two all-tournament players — claimed the school's 15th conference golf title at overcast and chilly Crispin Center inside Oglebay Park Thursday afternoon. The Maroon Knights finished with an impressive team score of 310, which was 14 shots better than runner-up Barnesville.

"This is a young group that's worked really hard," Central head coach Jim Mortakis said. "The kids did a good job and played really well today."

With nary a senior in the mix, Mortakis believes even better rounds might lie ahead for his team.

"We have three juniors, a freshman and a first-year player, who has been improving all year long," Mortakis said. "It's just a good group of kids."

Fueling the Knights' charge was an impressive, one-over par round of 72 by tournament champion Derrick Harrison. He shot an even 35 on the inward nine. He signed a card that included four bogeys and three birdies, including an impressive birdie on the last to give him his 72.

"Coming in, I had two goals ... not to choke under the pressure and break 80," Harrison smiled. "This is my best tournament

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T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**BARNESVILLE'S PAYNE** Johnson watches his chip on the ninth hole during Thursday's OVAC Class 3A golf championship at Oglebay Park's Crispin Course. Johnson finished with a round of 78 to finish tied for fourth overall and earn a spot on the all tournament team.

# Wheeling Park wins 5A golf title

By **CODY TOMER**  
For The Times Leader

**WHEELING** — Jacob Nickell has been on the verge of winning an individual OVAC title since his freshman year but has come up just short. That was until Thursday.

The Wheeling Park senior shot an incredible score of 67, four under-par, to earn medalist honors and lead the Patriots to a 5A OVAC championship victory.

"It feels great to win it for the first time," Nickell said. "I have been within three shots of winning every year since I was a freshman but it feels great to finally get it done."

Dorothy Romanek carded an 82, Noah Sievertson tallied an 85, Ryan Payne delivered an 87 and Lydia Simon added

a 91 to help garner Park's first OVAC group title in three years.

"This is wonderful," Wheeling Park coach Don Headley said. "The whole year we have been working hard and getting better every match. Lydia and Dorothy have been working hard on their game and it is really starting to show. Ryan is playing well and our freshman, Noah, is stepping in there and playing very well."

"Nickell is the glue that holds us all together. When he can shoot a 4-under par, the others have to pull their numbers out, too."

"I am the happiest coach in the world right now. We have a good team with good kids and I couldn't ask for a better

group." Nickell collected six birdies on the Par-71 Jones Course at Oglebay on his way to victory due to outstanding putting.

"I felt like I made every putt that I looked at," Nickell said. "I hit my irons really well and kept it in play, too."

"The greens here at Jones, on the back nine especially, are so tough. When you are above the hole and putting down hill, you know you are in trouble. It is hard to stop it near the hole and you have

to be more aggressive when you're below the hole."

It wasn't as easy as he made it look, however. On the 17th hole, Nickell's tee



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score ever. I played conservative golf because I didn't want to make too many mistakes. I was able to stay out of trouble and it led to a good round."

Harrison credited his driver and iron play as the key reasons he was able to post such a low number.

"My putting should have been better, but I am not going to complain," Harrison confessed. "I was in position to score well."

While Harrison was excited for his first individual OVAC championship, the third consecutive team title was even more satisfying.

"To move up a class and still win is great," Harrison said. "This (performance) really builds up a lot of confidence and momentum moving forward toward the sectional. I just have to keep it in the back of my head that I did well here, so I need to keep that going."

Central's J.C. Maxwell was the tournament runnerup. He rebounded from a 39 on the front to post a 36 on the back en route to a 75 and a spot on the all-tournament team.

Junior Zach Mazur (80) and Chayse Stahanczyk (83) rounded out the scoring for the Knights.

"There probably aren't very many

teams, in any class, that are able to post those kinds of numbers," Mor-takis said. "(The OVAC) is really our first concrete goal of the season. Having two guys make the all-tournament team certainly helps out."

Barnesville, which finished an undefeated season in the Ohio Valley Golf League earlier this week, had two players qualify for all-tournament. Leading the way for the Sham-rocks were Payne Johnson and Tyler Willison. Both finished with a 78.

Magnolia, which was the defending champion, was led by Trey Blain's round of 74. He finished third overall.

## • 3A

Continued from Page B1

shot went to the right of the fairway near several trees, but he stayed focused, made a great recovery shot and parred the hole.

"I had to take a big cut," Nickell said. "You can't get down on yourself. You have to focus on the next shot because whatever you have done is already behind you and you can't keep dwelling on that.

Brooke freshman Ryan Bilby was the OVAC runner-up as he turned in a round of 70, one under par for the course, to lead the Bruins.

"It feels pretty good to do this as a freshman," Bilby said. "My driver was hitting everything down the middle and I was able to get them on the greens from there."

Despite being just a

Brooke coach Ron Ujcich Jr. said. "He is fun to watch and he doesn't get flustered, even when he does have a bad hole. He maintains it and keeps everything together."

Rounding out the All-OVAC team along with Nickell and Bilby are Warren's Nick Ward (75), Parkersburg South's Luke Commiskey (77) and Uni-

Morgantown (364), Beaver Local (368), John Marshall (376), Weir (384) and Indian Creek (449).

Evan Cuomo turned in an 88, Justin Shelton supplied a 90 and Justin Penny-backer added a 93 for Brooke.

The Monarchs were led by Colton Patrello's 83, followed by scores of 95 from Dustin Beazel and

## CAMBRIDGE

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Smith and Wilkin, who paced the team with scores of 82 and 83, respectively, earned all-OVAC honors, while Ray carded an 88. Christopher Dilts rounded out the scoring with a 94.

"This is a very, very tough golf course and a very good course to (play this tournament on)," Smith said. "It's tough, but always in great condition."

Smith beamed when talking about his team's parity, which he knew would come in handy.

"Everyone played very well," he said. "There were bad things, but they overcame them. I'm proud of them. They didn't let things snowball."

"I couldn't ask for more out of them."

Meadowbrook coach Mel Pesuit said the same about Singleton.

The senior showed why he was the likely favorite, firing a one-over 72 — his best OVAC championship performance.

He was below par before bogeying the final two holes.

"That hurt me, but I'm happy," Singleton said, who'd recorded a 77, 82 and 83 in his previous three OVAC tournaments.

"I've been working on my chipping and putting a

lot," Singleton said. "That saved me a lot of strokes."

Singleton recorded a 37 on the front nine, including a bogey on his first hole. His back nine, which totaled 35, went better, until the final two holes.

"I hit my tee shots better," he said. "That was a key."

Harrison Central's Clint Heavilin shot 83, earning all-OVAC honors and leading the Huskies. He finished with a 39 on the back nine, one of only three competitors to shoot under 40 on the back nine (Singleton, 35; East Liverpool's Alex Tambellini, 39)

"He played very well," Huskies coach Todd Dunlap said. "One hole tripped him up and made his score higher than it should've been. But, 83 is a good score."

"He made the all-OVAC team, and that's the first time he's done that, so that's good for him because he's put a lot of time in."

Nick Coffland added an 87 for Harrison Central, while Cruz Capers and Sam Santille both had 91s.

"This is probably one of the better rounds we've played down here the past few years," Dunlap said. "We had a chance. We were right there."

Tambellini finished with an 80 and also qualified for the all-OVAC squad.

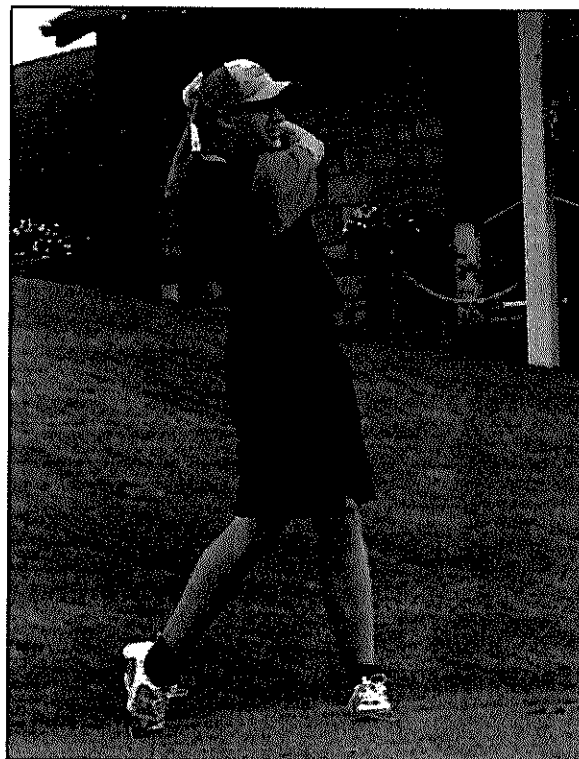


Photo by Rick Thorp

Cambridge's Ian Smith hits a tee shot during the 4A OVAC Championship.

# Cambridge Is 4A Champions

By RICK THORP  
For The Intelligencer

WHEELING — Guernsey County made its presence felt Tuesday at the OVAC Class 4A Golf Championship.

Cambridge took home the team crown, while Meadowbrook's Trey Singleton repeated as medalist under mostly overcast skies at Oglebay Park's challenging Robert Trent Jones layout.

The Bobcats, the only team to have all six of its entrants score in double digits, finished with 347, five strokes better than Harrison Central.

Steubenville was third with a score of 379, followed by the Colts (381), St. Clairsville (392), Edison (399), Buckeye Local (401), Martins Ferry (408), East Liverpool (411) and Oak Glen (502).

"This is the first one for me, so it means a lot," Cambridge coach Kevin Smith said of the title, the first for the school since a three-peat from 1992-94.

"Anytime you win an OVAC championship, it means a lot. It really does."

It was truly a team effort from the Bobcats, with three golfers bunched up in the 80s — Ian Smith, A.J. Wilkin and Andrew Ray.

See CAMBRIDGE, Page 12

# Madonna Wins Ninth Straight OVAC Title



Photo by Cody Tomer

Madonna's Howie Peterson putts on the 17th green of Tuesday's 1A-2A OVAC golf championship.

## Blue Dons' Peterson claims medalist honors for 3rd time

By **CODY TOMER**  
Staff Writer

**WHEELING** — The Madonna golf team is on a run for the ages.

The Blue Dons captured their ninth consecutive OVAC championship on Tuesday at Crispin Golf Course, led by senior Howie Peterson, who collected his third OVAC individual title in a row.

Madonna scored 315 points to pick up the victory and Peterson tied a 1A OVAC record with a 65, which is 6-under-par. He also recorded nine birdies on the par-71 course.

"It feels good," Peterson said. "This is a good tournament with good competition and it is run really well.

"The key was just hitting the ball as close as I could and not getting stupid with my puts. I tried to get them within a couple feet and make easy pars. I just got some to fall."

Peterson was the only competitor to turn in a score under-par in the tournament, as the senior looks to be geared up for a run deep into the postseason.

"Playing with this team is great," Peterson said. "We struggled a little bit early on but I think we are starting to come around and get in a groove. We are looking forward to regionals and states."

Joining Peterson on the All-OVAC team were Blue Dons' seniors Hunter Sistilli with a card of 79 and Tony Sellitti with a score of 81.

"This has been awesome," Madonna coach T.J. Brancazio said. "We have had a great group of kids each year and they just keep passing the baton to the next year. It is great to work with great kids, who keep working to get better.

"Howie was amazing (Tuesday), along with our other two seniors. All of them have improved on their game this year and this was our first major goal of the year. Now, we have to shoot for regionals and try to make it to states again."

Dom Mazur (90) and Chad Durante (96) rounded out the scoring for Madonna to top off the ninth title in a row.

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## MADONNA

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"They are like an extended family," Brancazio said. "They are like the boys I never had. They are good kids and nine years has been an awesome run."

Linsly earned runner-up honors with a score of 335, followed by Trinity (349), Steubenville Central (357), Toronto (359), Bridgeport (374), Southern Local (404), Shadyside (431) and River (457).

The Cadets were led by freshman Ryan Dembiczak's 79 and senior Cory Smith's 80. Both earned spots on the All-OVAC team.

"I'm super excited," Linsly coach Mark Landini said. "I am really happy for Cory. He has been injured this year and hasn't played for a couple of weeks but he played (Monday) for the first time, before playing (Tuesday)."

"Ryan Dembiczak has done a great job for us. He was the co-medalist the last

couple of times we played at Jones."

Rounding out the order for the Cadets were Dylan Dunlevy and A.J. Nairn, who each shot an 88, along with Aiden Grubler's 98.

"I'm lucky to have a nice group of freshmen who are all very competitive," Landini said. "I am really proud of our team. It has been a really fun season and we aren't done yet."

Trinity's Mark Spruill was the tournament's runner-up with a mark of 77, to earn All-OVAC honors.

Bridgeport was led by Angie Sommer with an 82 and Steubenville Central was paced by Zach Campbell's 86.

Toronto's Cole DeGarmo and Hunter Keegan also delivered scores of 86, while River's Ridge Thompson accumulated an 87, Shadyside's Nate Milhoan accounted for a 105, Clay-Battelle's Colton Barr generated a 108 and Paden City's Reece Blatt added a 142.



Wheeling Park's Jacob Nickell delivers a shot during the 5A OVAC championship on Thursday at the Jones Course at Oglebay.

Photo by  
Cody Tomer

# Park Wins OVAC Title

## Nickell earns medalist honors

**BY CODY TOMER**  
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WHEELING — Jacob Nickell has been on the verge of winning an individual OVAC title since his freshman year but has come up just short. That was until Thursday.

The Wheeling Park senior shot an incredible score of 67, 4-under-par, to earn medalist honors and lead the Patriots to a 5A OVAC championship victory.

"It feels great to win it for the first time," Nickell said. "I have been within three shots of winning every year since I was a freshman but it feels great to finally get it done."

Dorothy Romanek carded an 82, Noah Sievertson tallied an 85, Ryan Payne delivered an 87 and Lydia Simon added a 91 to help garner Park's first OVAC title in three years.

"This is wonderful," Wheeling Park coach Don Headley said. "The whole year we have been working hard and getting better every match. Lydia and Dorothy have been working hard on their game and it is really

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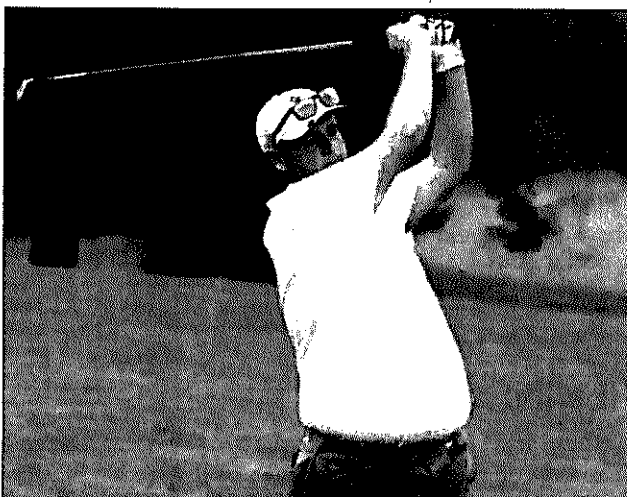
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"I am the happiest coach in the world right now. We have a good team with good kids and I couldn't ask for a better group."

Nickell collected six birdies on the Par-71 Jones Course at Oglebay on his way to victory due to outstanding putting.

See **PARK**, Page 10

# Maroon Knights Claim 3-Peat



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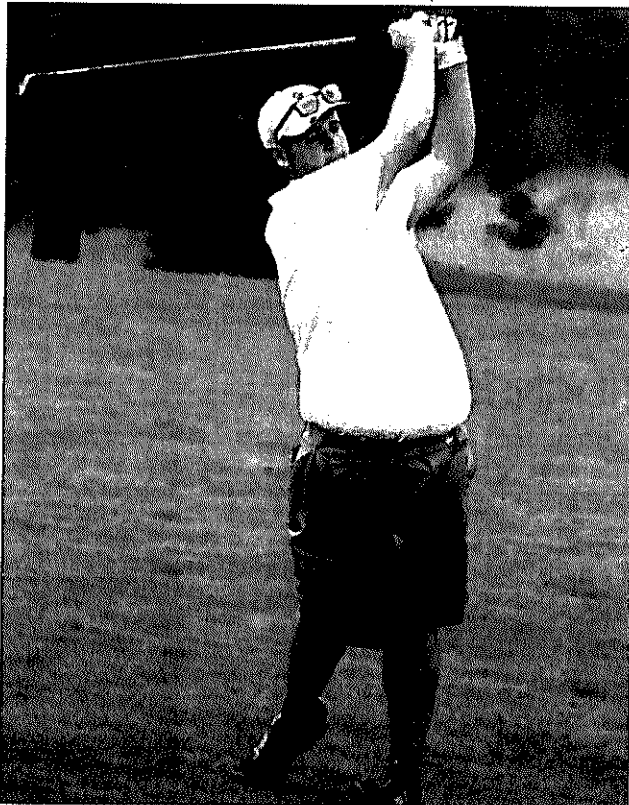
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Fueling the Knights' charge was an impressive, one-over par round of 72 by tournament champion Derrick Harrison. He shot an even 35 on the inward nine. He signed a card that included four bogeys and three birdies, including an impressive birdie on the last to give him his 72.

"Coming in, I had two goals ... not to choke under the pressure and break 80," Harrison said.

See KNIGHTS, Page 10

Photo by Seth Staskey

Wheeling Central's Derrick Harrison watches his fairway shot during the OVAC Championship Thursday.

# PARK

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"I felt like I made every putt that I looked at," Nickell said. "I hit my irons really well and kept it in play, too."

"The greens here at Jones, on the back nine especially, are so tough. When you are above the hole and putting down hill, you know you are in trouble. It is hard to stop it near the hole and you have to be more aggressive when you're below the hole."

It wasn't as easy as he made it look, however. On the 17th hole, Nickell's tee shot went to the right of the fairway near several trees, but he stayed focused, made a great recovery shot and parred the hole.

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"I was able to make up for it with a par. I made a good put from above the hole that was going to be trouble if I didn't make it. That was big to make."

Brooke freshman Ryan Bilby was the runner-up as he turned in a round of 70, 1-under-par for the course, to lead the Bruins.

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"My driver was hitting everything down the middle and I was able to get them on the greens from there."

Despite being just a freshman, Bilby has shown composure all season and he showed his talent on the biggest stage of the year.

"He keeps getting better as the year goes on," Brooke coach Ron Ujcich Jr. said.

"He is fun to watch and he doesn't get flustered, even when he does have a bad hole."

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Rounding out the All-OVAC team along with Nickell and Bilby are Warren's Nick Ward (75), Parkersburg South's Luke Commiskey (77) and University's Jacob Wood (79).

Parkersburg South earned runner-up honors with a 328 score, followed by Warren (329), University (340), Brooke (341), Morgantown (364), Beaver Local (368), John Marshall (376), Weir (384) and Indian Creek (449).

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## KNIGHTS

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(Continued from Page 9)

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# Harrison Central runnerup in 4A

• Cambridge uses balance for team title

By RICK THORP  
Times Leader Sports Writer



T-L Photo/RICK THORP  
**HARRISON CENTRAL'S** Clint Heavilin watches his shot from the bunker during Tuesday's action.

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T-L Photo/RICK THORP  
**MARTINS FERRY'S** Luke Krol positions his ball during Tuesday's action.

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Continued from Page B1

"This is a very, very tough golf course and a very good course to (play this tournament on)," Smith continued. "It's tough, but always in great condition."

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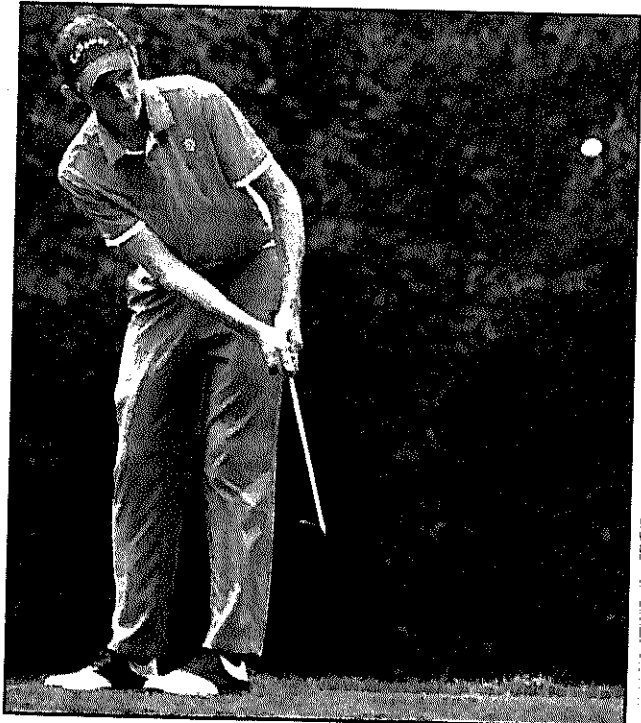
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Photo/CODY TOMER

**RIVER'S RIDGE** Thompson watches his chip shot during Tuesday's action

# Madonna continues remarkable 1A run

• Dons' Peterson captures third medalist

By CODY TOMER  
For The Times Leader



Photo/CODY TOMER

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## • 1A

Continued from Page B1

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"I'm lucky to have a nice group of freshmen who are all very competitive," Landini said. "I am really proud of our team. It has been a really fun season and we aren't done yet."

Trinity's Mark Spruill was the tournament's runner-up with a mark of 77, to earn All-OVAC honors.

Bridgeport was led by Angie Sommer with an 82 and Steubenville Central was paced by Zach Campbell's 86. Toronto's Cole DeGarmo and Hunter Keegan also delivered scores of 86, while River's Ridge Thompson accumulated an 87, Shadyside's Nate Milhoan accounted for a 105, Clay-Battelle's Colton Barr generated a 108 and Paden City's Reece Blatt added a 142.

WHEELING — The Madonna golf team is on a run for the ages.

The Blue Dons captured their ninth consecutive OVAC championship on Tuesday at Crispin Golf Course, led by senior Howie Peterson, who collected his third OVAC individual title in a row.

Madonna scored 315 points to pick up the victory and Peterson tied a 1A OVAC record with a 65, which is six-under-par. He also recorded nine birdies on the par-71 course.

"It feels good," Peterson said. "This is a good tournament with good competition and it is run really well."

"The key was just hitting the ball as close as I could and not getting stupid with my puts. I tried to get them within a couple feet and make easy pars. I just got some to fall."



Photo/CODY TOMER

BRIDGEPORT'S DYLAN Gregoric watches his putt during Tuesday's action.

Peterson was the only competitor to turn in a score under-par in the tournament, as the senior looks to be geared up for a run

deep into the postseason.

"Playing with this team is great," Peterson said. "We struggled a little bit early on but I think we are starting to come around and get in a groove. We are looking forward to regionals and states."

Joining Peterson on the All-OVAC team were Blue Dons' seniors Hunter Sistilli with a card of 79 and Tony Sellitti with a score of 81.

"This has been awesome," Madonna coach T.J. Brancazio said. "We have had a great group of kids each year and they just keep passing the baton to the next year. It is great to work with great kids, who keep working to get better."

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