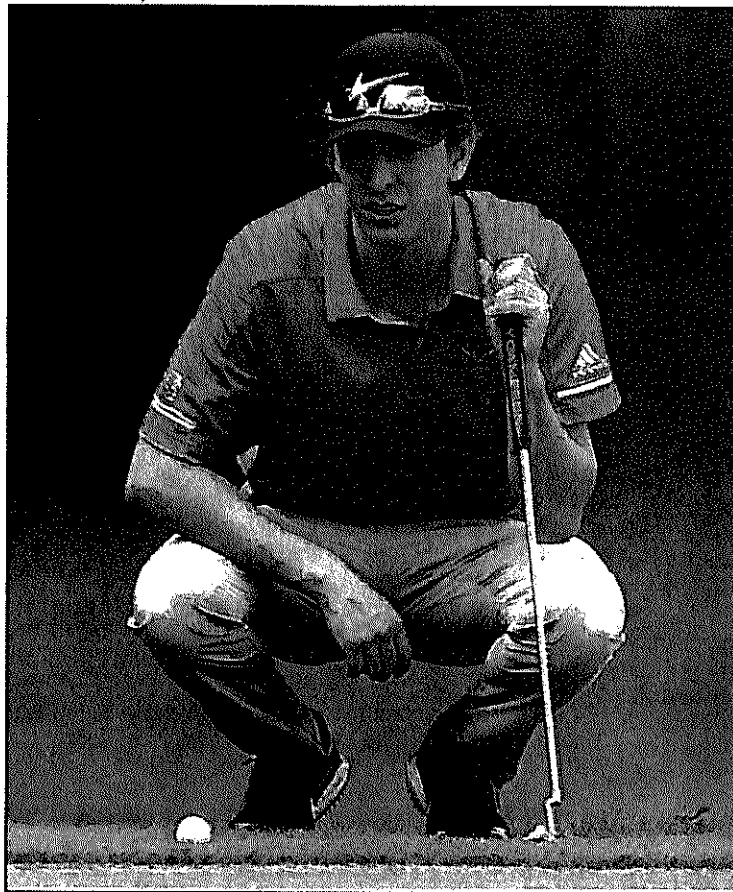
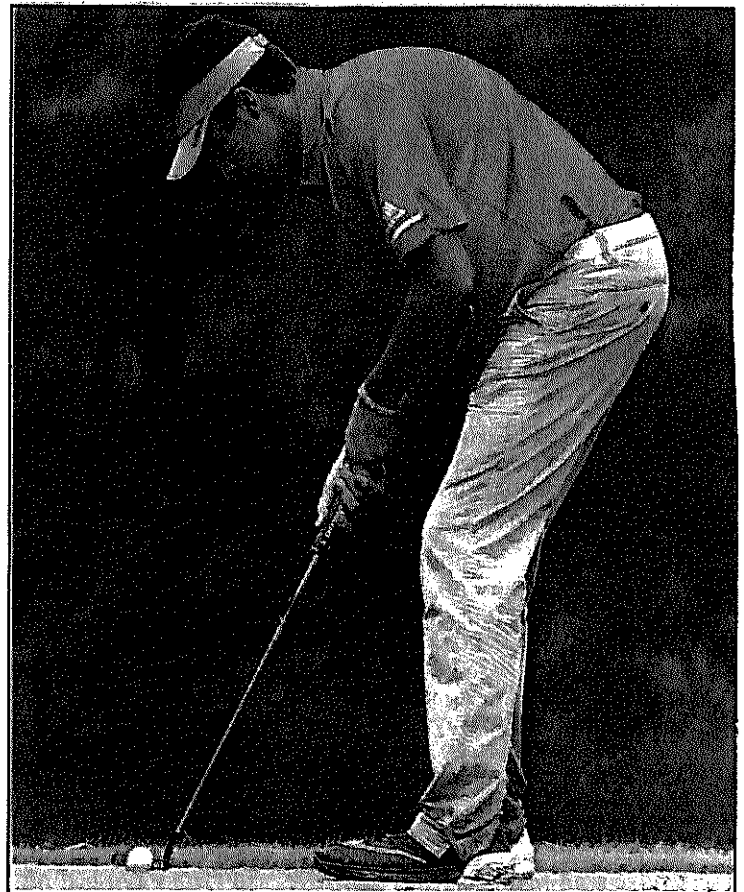


SPORTS



TL Photo/SETH STASKEY

ST. CLAIRSVILLE senior Brendan Vucelich eyes a putt during the OVAC Class 4A Golf Championship held Tuesday at Oglebay Park's Jones Course. Vucelich shot a 76 to share medalist honor.



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St. Clairsville rolls to 4A golf title

• Jeffries, Vucelich share medalist with rounds of 76

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

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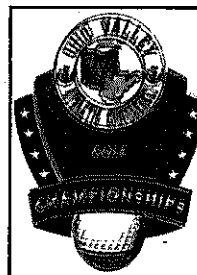
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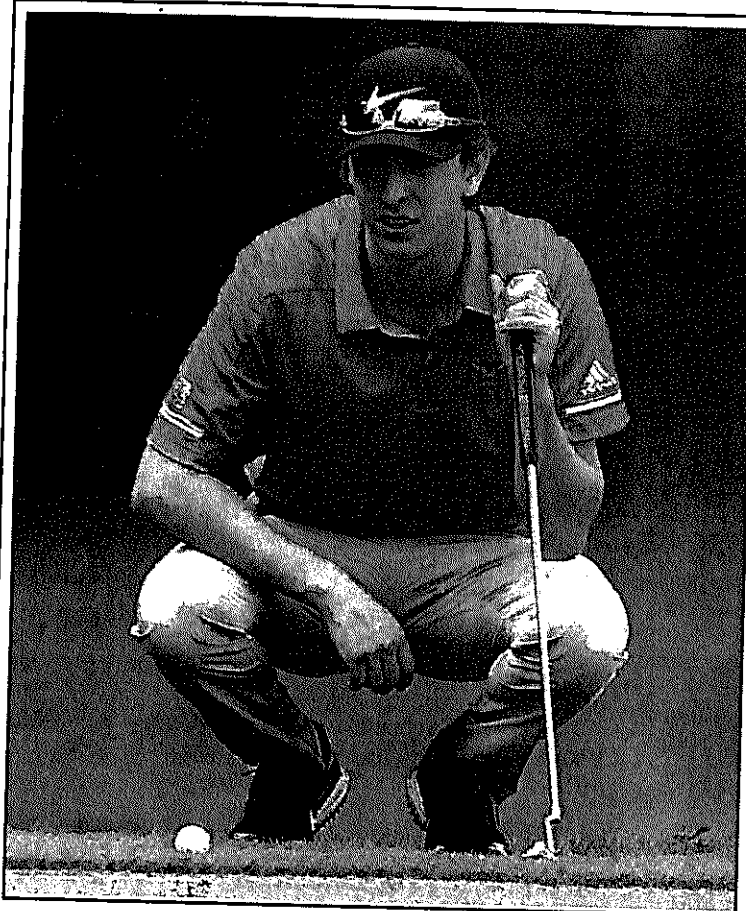
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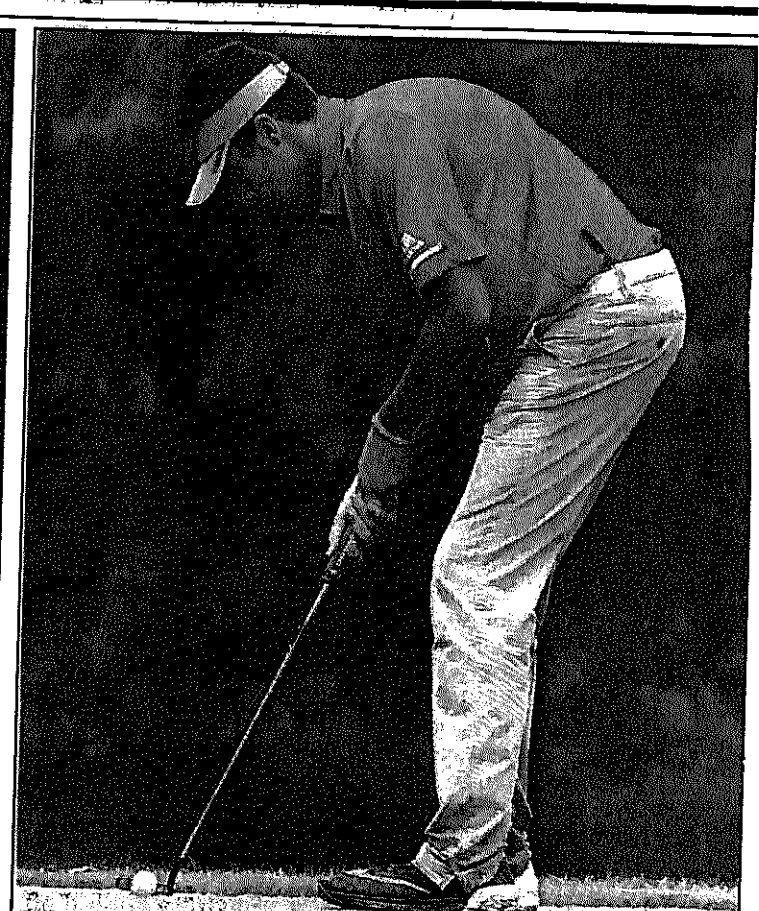
cake because of the team success. "We won (the team title) and there's nothing wrong with being a co-champion, especially when it's with your teammate and friend," Vucelich said. "An OVAC (team) title was something that we didn't have and we knew





T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

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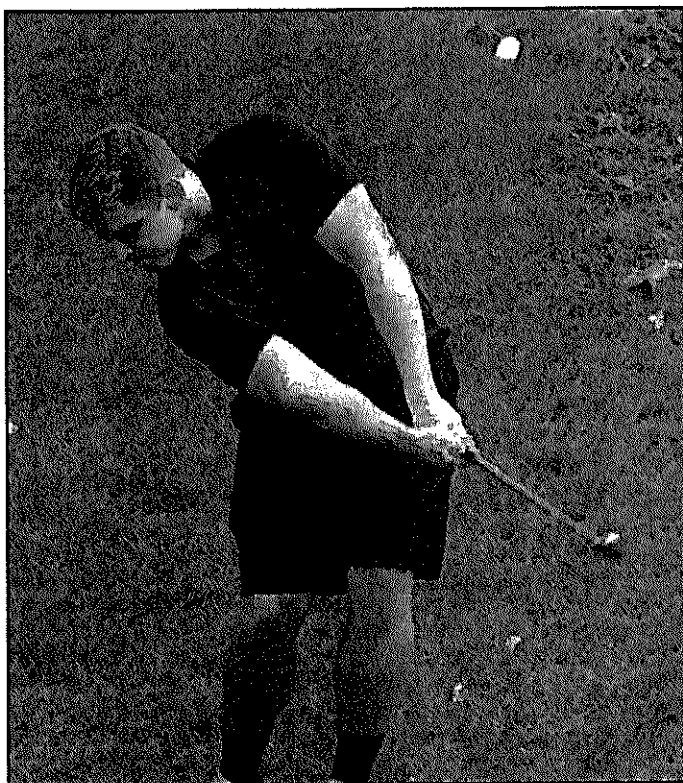
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Photo/KYLE LUTZ

BRIDGEPORT'S KEVIN Herink chips the ball during Tuesday's OVAC Golf Tournament at Oglebay Park's Crispin Course. Herink earned a spot on the all-OVAC team as the Bulldogs finished second in the team scores.

Wheeling Central wins 1A/2A OVAC golf crown by 33 shots

• Bridgeport's Herink earns all-OVAC status

By **KYLE LUTZ**
For The Times Leader

WHEELING — Another year, another trophy for Wheeling Central. The Maroon Knights have solidified itself as a powerhouse in golf as they captured the OVAC Class 1A/2A championship on an overcast Tuesday at Crispin Golf Course at Oglebay Park.

Wheeling Central totaled 310 strokes, 33 more than runner-up Bridgeport (343). Steubenville Catholic placed third with a 345.

"They played pretty well," Maroon Knights coach Jim Mortakis said. "My (No.) 3 and 4 kids were right there close to making All-OVAC. They work hard, they practice and they spend a lot of time at the golf course. They have some specific goals and this was just one of them. Hopefully, they're just going to continue to play better and do well.

"It's just a singular goal that we have during the year to win the

OVAC. To do that, it worked out good. To win convincingly like we did, too, makes you feel pretty good about where your program is and where we're going."

There were a lot of accomplishments for Wheeling Central. It was the fourth straight year it took home the hardware and it also had a clean sweep in the medalist category.

Derrick Harrison turned in a 73 for the low round of the day while J.C. Maxwell shot a solid 76, good enough for runner-up medalist.

Also scoring for the Maroon Knights were Zach Mazur (80) and Matt Mazur (81).

"Everything was going as planned," Harrison said. "Driver was working really well. I was hitting my irons really well and putting was as good as its going to be on these greens (Tuesday)."

Harrison was also crowned medalist last year when the Maroon Knights won the 3A tournament. As the tour-

See, **1A/2A**, Page B2

Continued from Page B1

nament played the front nine of the Crispin course twice, the senior shot even-par 36 the second time around where he birdied twice.

"I played here (Monday) and I knew the greens were going to be slow, but they improved," Harrison said. "They were faster, but they were still going to be slow. You could pretty much attack any pin you wanted to because you knew the ball was going to stop, and that's pretty much what I did."

Winning seems to be in Harrison's blood. While he has won the medalist for the second straight year, he also has a great team accomplishment. Harrison has always been on the winning end when it comes to the OVAC Tournament all four years he has played.

"We had great leadership my first two years and now having to come in as captain and lead us the past two years, trying to win, it feels good that we won all four years I've been here," Harrison said.

Maxwell, a sophomore, was just as impressive. After shooting 39, on his first go-around, he turned made up some ground and turned in a 37.

"I knew it was going to be wet, so I just wanted to keep it in the fairway," Maxwell said. "I know I could attack pins. I knew I could get it on, make a couple of putts and be good."

With another OVAC championship in the bag, it will definitely give the Maroon Knights a boost for later in the season. With regionals right around the corner, Mortakis plans to see more accomplishments.

"I expect J.C. and Derrick to compete for the medalist honors," Mortakis said about regionals. "We obviously want to win or at a minimum come in second because we advance to the state tournament. That's our ultimate goal is to get to the state tournament. My goal ultimately would be to win. We'll take that as it comes."

Leading the way for Bridgeport was Kevin Herink as he turned in a solid 77 after shooting an even-par on the first nine holes. Cooper Dulesky tallied an 85 for the Bulldogs while Angela Sommer shot 88. Jason Sommer rounded out the Bridgeport scoring with a 93.

Herink also secured All-OVAC honors.

"We have three seniors playing," Bridgeport coach Jeff Herink said. "They all stepped up. They had better rounds of the year and as a whole team, they each golfed pretty steady, gave us a score to come in runner-up, which we are more than happy with."

The Crusaders compiled a third place finish. Cole Tegano and Zach Campbell both shot an impressive 78 to lead the way for the Crusaders and also received All-OVAC

Continued from Page B1

Though there are no scoreboards posted at prep golf tournaments, the pair were close enough to one another that they crossed paths a few times.

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Though the course was extremely saturated, Jeffries didn't mind it because it suited his aggressive style.

"You could really throw darts at the pins because the ball was sticking," Jeffries noted. "It was tough though at times."

Vucelich wouldn't let the conditions become an issue to him, continually reminding himself that some 60 other players were facing the same terrain.

With those two scores posted, the remainder of the team race was almost anticlimatic, shifting from who would win the team title to by how many would the Red Devils prevail.

St. C. came into the tournament as the favorite and with Vucelich and Jeffries leading the way, was able to deliver an impressive score despite difficult conditions, many of which were caused by the multiple inches of rain which fell last weekend.

"I am proud of how the guys kept their heads in the game despite the condi-

tions," St. C coach Caden Myers said. "We were all nervous (when we got to the course), especially when we realized we wouldn't be able to hit range balls. We tried to go out and play a little bit (on Monday), but that didn't work out well because of the flooding and things. But, we had played this course a few times and we knew it would be a test. The kids kept their heads and got it done."

That they did.

Along with the work that Jeffries and Vucelich put forth, senior Broc Crist (85) and Saul Crist (91), who moved to St. Clairsville during the summer from Lincoln County, West Virginia, put forth their usual solid performances.

Myers, who was a part of the last two St. C. teams to win an OVAC title, simply called himself "blessed" to have the team he does in his first season.

"To bring back an OVAC title for the first time since I played is a great feeling," Myers said. "These kids are amazing and I'm just fortunate to have these guys."

St. Clairsville prevailed by 27 shots over Cambridge, which claimed the title last year. Harrison Central (356), Beaver Local (379) and Buckeye Local (389) rounded out the top five team scores.

Cambridge's Ian Smith (79), Harrison Central's Cruz Capers (79) and Beaver Local's T.J. Wilson (82) rounded out the top five, individually for all-OVAC honors.

Friday,
September 14, 2018

OVAC CLASS 3A GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS

Johnson leads 'Rocks to title

• Barnesville captures its first
OVAC golf crown in 35 years

By RICK THORP

Times Leader Sports Writer

WHEELING — The early returns were encouraging for Payne Johnson on Thursday.

The Barnesville junior was part of the first group to return to the clubhouse at Oglebay's Crispin Golf Course, which hosted the annual OVAC Class 3A Golf Championships.

Johnson fired a 1-over-par 72, and it jumped off the scoreboard. It also stood up.

About three hours later, once the final scores were filled in, Johnson was awarded the championship plaque, the spoils of winning the conference's individual title — his first.

But instead of talking about his own achievements, Johnson focused on his team, which, behind his win, captured the school's first conference golf title in 35 years and second overall.

Par for the course for the young man, who, by all accounts, is as humble on the greens as off.

"These are my friends," Johnson smiled, looking in the direction of his teammates after celebratory photos. "I owe it all to them.

"You saw our one through four golfers shot in the 70s. That really takes a lot of pressure off."

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"They came out and shot as good of a round of golf, collectively, as a team as I've ever been associated with," Barnesville head coach Jerry Robinson stated. "The kids truly won together as a team."

Linsly, behind all-OVAC honoree Dylan Dunlevy's 75, was second in the team standings. Magnolia, paced by Trey Blain's 74, was third.

Blain defeated Wells in a two-hole playoff for runner-up honors. Buckeye Trail was fourth in the team standings, followed by Fort Frye, Monroe Central and Union Local.

Johnson posted a 78 last season. This year, he carded a pair of birdies, including one to finish his front 9 with a 37.

"That's really good on this course," he said. "That really helped carry me into the back 9."

There, Johnson shot an even 35.

"I just stayed really consistent. I just stuck to my game and didn't worry about anything else.

"When I came in (Thursday), I just tried to focus on playing the game. The last couple of matches I struggled a bit. So I just wanted to play and not get upset over every small thing. I feel like I did that really well.

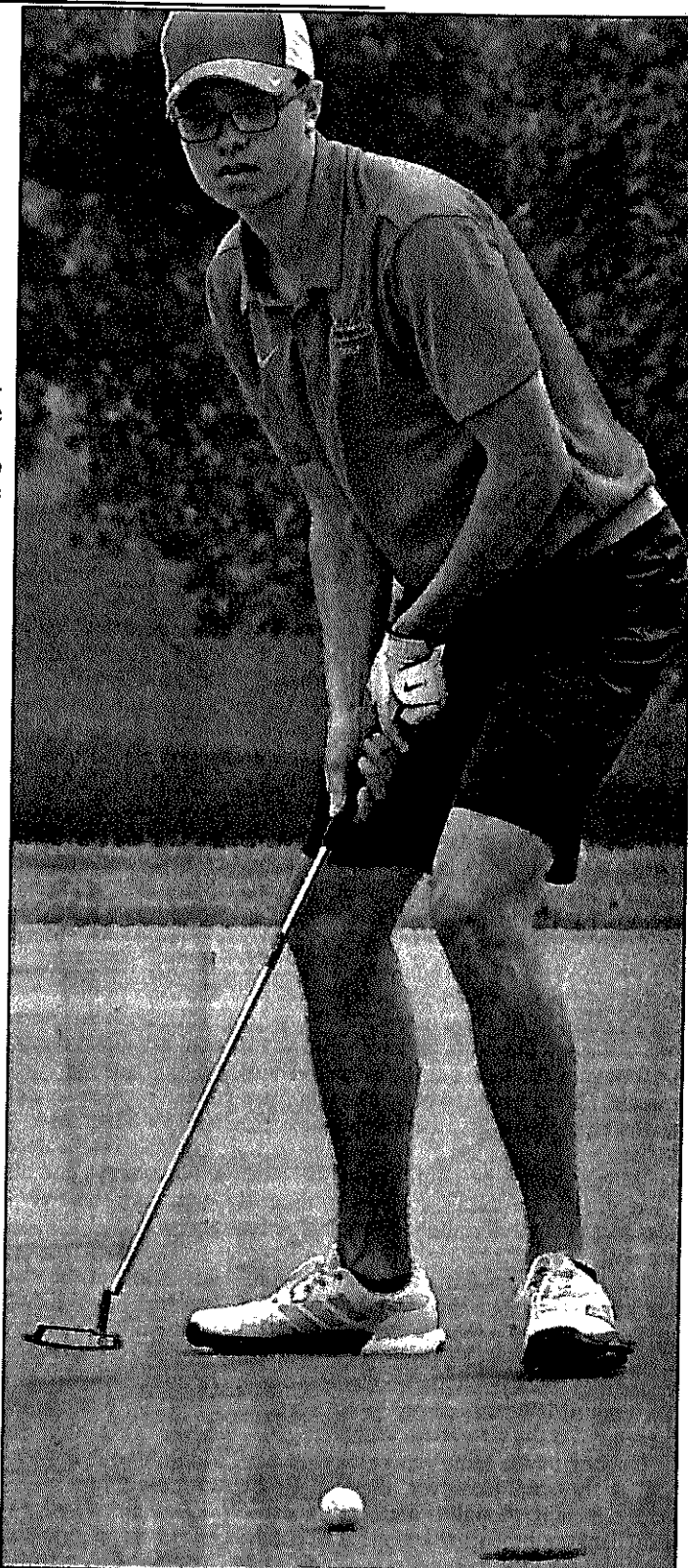
"I was very happy with the way I played."

Robinson was pleased with his entire team, and hopes it will serve as a springboard to success come the postseason.

"I couldn't be more proud of a group of kids," he said. "We came so close last year the kids could taste it. That was a goal we set at the beginning of the year.

"I challenged the kids at the beginning of the season that if you can win an OVAC championship you'll go down in school history."

Consider history written.



FL Photo/RICK THORP
BARNESVILLE'S PAYNE Johnson watches a putt during Thursday's OVAC Class 3A Golf Championships at Oglebay's Crispin Golf Course. The Shamrocks junior carded a 72, claiming his first individual title and guiding his team to its first conference crown since 1982.

St. C. Claims 4A Golf Title

Jeffries, Vucelich are co-medalists at OVACs

By **SETH STASKEY**
For *The Intelligencer*

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Please see ST.C., Page 12

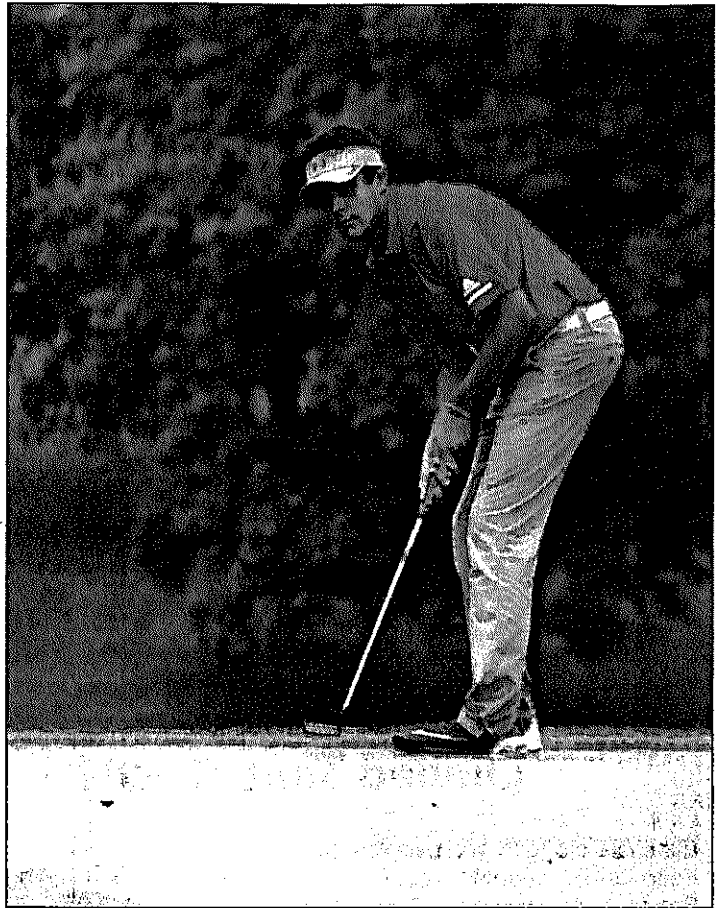


Photo by Seth Staskey
St. Clairsville's Jacob Jeffries putts during Tuesday's OVAC 4A Golf Tournament at the Jones Course at Oglebay Park's Spiedel Golf Club.

ST.C.

(Continued from Page 11)

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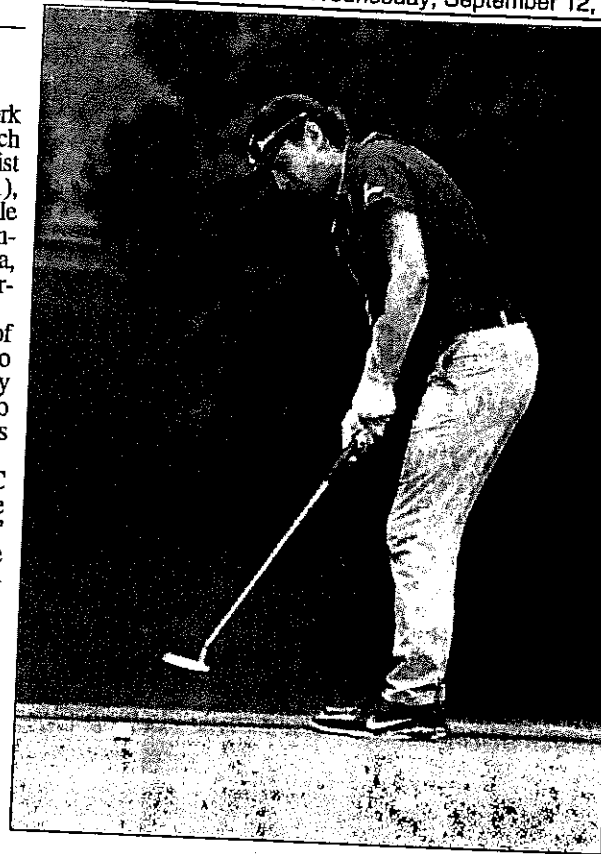


Photo by Seth Staskey
St. Clairsville's Brendan Vucelich fires a putt toward the hole during Tuesday's 4A OVAC Golf Championship at the Jones Course at Oglebay Park's Splendid Golf Club. He earned co-medalist honors.

Central Wins 4th Straight OVAC Title



Harrison earns
medalist honors

By KYLE LUTZ
Staff Writer

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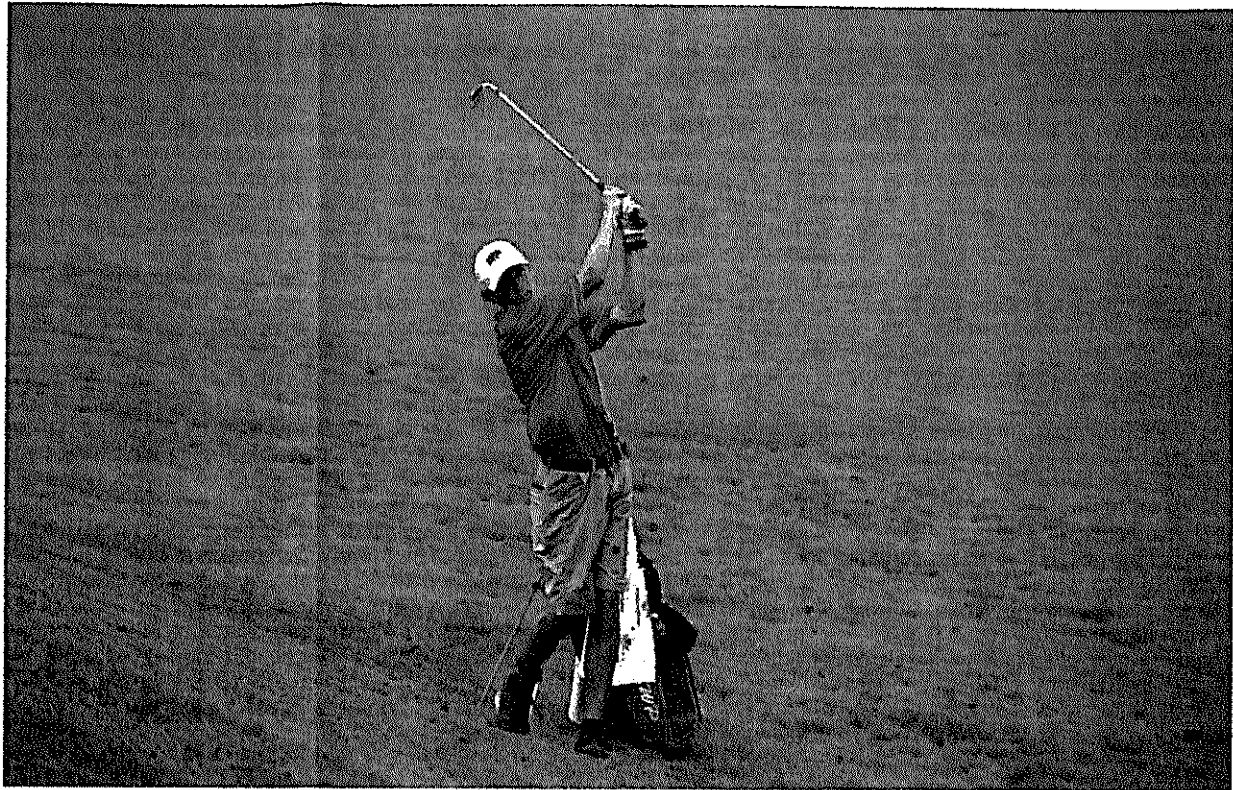
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Photo by Kyle Lutz
Wheeling Central's Derrick Harrison delivers a putt during Tuesday's OVAC Golf Championship at the Crispin Golf Course at Oglebay Park.

Please see
CENTRAL, Page 12



Top: Wheeling Park's Noah Seivertson delivers a shot on the 18th hole of the Jones Course during the OVAC 5A Championship. Bottom: OVAC Individual champion Ryan Bilby of Brooke takes aim on the 18th hole. Photos by Cody Tomer

Park Wins Another 5A Title

Brooke's Bilby wins Big-School medalist

By **CODY TOMER**
Staff Writer

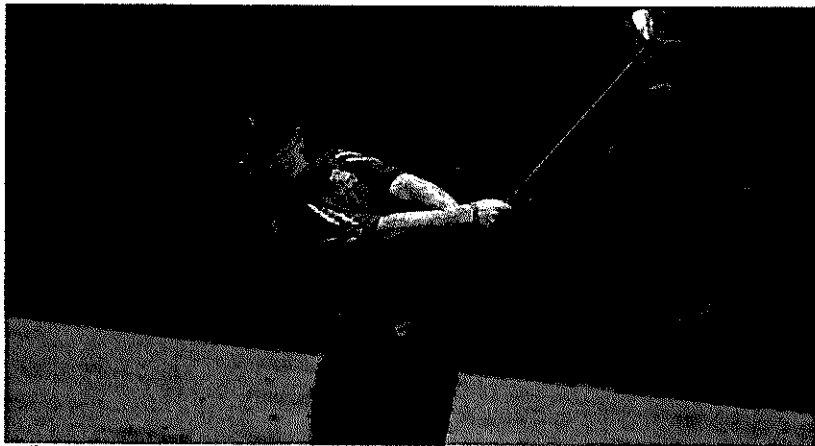
WHEELING — Winning back-to-back championships is never easy, especially after losing an all-state golfer to graduation.

If there were any doubts that Wheeling Park could achieve that goal, they were put to rest Thursday.

The Patriots captured their second straight OVAC 5A title with a team card of 330, 11 shots ahead of runner-up Warren Local (341) and 12 shots better than Parkersburg South (342) at the Jones Course at Oglebay Park's Spiedel Golf Club.

After watching his senior teammate Jacob Nickell capture an OVAC individual title a year ago, sophomore Noah Seivertson stepped into the team's No. 1 role and earned runner-up honors with a score of 77.

Brooke's Ryan Bilby, last year's runner-up, catapulted himself to the top as he fired a 2-over par 73 to claim match medalist.



The sophomore duo was joined by co-runner-up Austin Barta (77) of Warren Local, Parkersburg South's Zach Redmon (80) and Luke Commiskey (81), along with Wheeling Park senior Ryan Payne (81) on the All-OVAC Tournament team.

Seivertson improved by eight shots after shooting an 85 at last year's event, while Payne jumped up six strokes following last year's 87.

"I think I just got bigger," Seivertson said. "I'm able to hit the ball a lot

farther and I had a couple lessons with professional Danny Ackerman (General Manager of Golf Operations at Oglebay), which made my ball striking ability a lot better.

"Also coming down the stretch I've been more clutch, lately."

Seivertson proved his strengths in the waning moments of the tournament as he collected three straight pars to finish the day.

*Please see **PARK**, Page 8*

PARK

(Continued from Page 7)

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"Noah did a fantastic job for us being the No. 1 man," Park coach Don Headley said. "He started out strong and then had a couple of bad holes, but he finished the final three holes with really all-world get up and downs. He was in some bad places and he still made par on the last three holes. That's what saved his round and he has worked hard on that all year.

"Ryan started out with three bogeys and ended up shooting an 81, which made a world of difference. Those couple of strokes really mattered."

James Salvatori, another Park sophomore, came through with a mark of 84, followed by Dorothy Romanek's score of 88 and Lydia Simon's count of 99.

"We have two sophomores and three seniors and they all carry each other and work together as a team," Headley said. "We always rode Jacob the last few years but now everybody is around 80 and if we can keep doing that, we're going to compete. It's a great feeling to have a team that works together like they do."

With the loss of Nickell, Payne wasn't exactly sure how the season would play out but with the rise of Park's young talent, he is ready to finish his career better than ever.

"This is really exciting," Payne said. "After losing Jacob, I thought it might be more of a rebuilding year but it's been a great season for us. We won the TRAC Tournament and now OVACs.

"Hopefully, we can get by in regionals

and go on to win the state championship."

Another OVAC member who has his eye on a state title is Bilby, who was on a mission after coming within three strokes of winning an OVAC title a year ago.

"It feels great to be only a sophomore and win OVACs," Bilby said. "Last year, Nickell just played really well. I played pretty good too, but there was nothing I could do about that."

Bilby turned in an even-par score of 36 on the front nine, before sinking a 25-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole.

"I hit it all right with my 3-wood and barely cleared the bunker," Bilby said. "My wedge shot only went about 30 feet but my putt broke about a foot, just how I wanted it."

As the crowd looked on outside of the Jones Clubhouse, Bilby came inches shy of draining of 40-foot putt on the 18th hole, where he finished strong with his 16th par of the afternoon.

"I played it about 10 feet to the left," Bilby said. "Another inch to the right and it goes in."

The Jones Course was hit hard this week with large amounts of rain but despite the soggy fairways, Headley was pleased with the playing conditions.

"Danny Ackerman and his crew up here did a fantastic job to get this place ready," Headley said. "For as bad as the weather has been over the last week, this place was immaculate and I really appreciate everything they do for us."

Rocks Claim 3A Golf Crown

By RICK THORP
For The Intelligencer

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Blain defeated Wells in a two-hole playoff for runner-up honors.

Buckeye Trail was fourth in the team standings, followed by Fort Frye, Monroe Central and Union Local.

Johnson posted a 78 last season. This year, he carded a pair of birdies,

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including one to finish his front 9 with a 37.

"That's really good on this course," he said. "That really helped carry me into the back 9."

There, Johnson shot an even 35.

"I just stayed really consistent. I just stuck to my game and didn't worry about anything else.

"When I came in (Thursday), I just tried to focus on playing the game. The last couple of matches I struggled a bit. So I just wanted to play and not get upset over every small thing. I feel like I did that really well.

"I was very happy with the way I played."

Robinson was pleased with his entire team, and hopes it will serve as a springboard to success come the postseason.

"I couldn't be more proud of a group of kids," he said. "We came so close last year the kids could taste it. That was a goal we set at the beginning of the year.

"I challenged the kids at the beginning of the season that if you can win an OVAC championship you'll go down in school history."

Consider history written.



Photo by Rick Thorp
Barnesville's Payne Johnson watches one of his shots during the OVAC Tournament on Thursday.