

Monson happy with 3 titles in row

Written by Jim Ecker

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Meg Monson can be her own worst critic on a golf course, but at this point it would be nit-picking.

Monson has been enjoying a terrific season at Mount Mercy University and is one of the hottest golfers at the NAIA level in the midwest.

Monson began the fall campaign with a second-place finish at the Mount Mercy Invitational at Hunters Ridge in Marion, but that was just a hint of things to come.

She has captured three straight titles since then with medalist honors at the Spirit Hollow Invitational in Burlington, the Fighting Scots Invitational in Monmouth (Ill.) and the Viterbo Invitational this past weekend in La Crosse (Wis.).

"I'm pretty happy with it," Monson said Monday. "It's nice to finally see all the hard work pay off. Last year I didn't do as well as I would've liked, so it's good to see it finally pay off now."

Mount Mercy Coach Colin Williams said Monson has really improved her "touch" shots this season with wedge shots from 40 to 70 yards. In addition, Williams said Monson has learned to stop being so hard on herself when she hits an errant shot.

"Meg is a person who has very high expectations for herself," said Williams. "Part of the work we do is trying to get her to be a little kinder to herself."

Monson know what he means.

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"I think I'm a perfectionist when it comes to my game," she said. "I get mad at myself easily if something doesn't go right. I've tried to stop that."

Monson fired a 2-over-par 74 at the tricky La Crosse Country Club Sunday to capture the Viterbo Invitational by nine shots. She won the Spirit Hollow title with a 5-over 77 and claimed the Fighting Scots tournament in a playoff.

"She's got great hands with a golf club," said Williams, an outstanding golfer himself. "Right now her swing, her timing, her rhythm are really good. Obviously she's playing very, very well."

Monson, now a junior at Mount Mercy, has been an outstanding golfer for a long time. She helped Clear Lake High School win two Class 3A state titles and she finished 8th, 3rd, 4th and 3rd again in the individual standings at state, beginning as a freshman.

Monson attended St. Francis University in Joliet (Ill.) for one semester and won two tournaments there in the fall of 2012, but got a little home-sick.

"I thought it would be a good fit," she said. "Golf and school and everything went well, but I just didn't like being so far away."

Monson transferred to Mount Mercy in January of 2013 and had to miss the spring campaign that year due to NAIA transfer rules. She enjoyed a solid year with the Mustangs as a sophomore, with one title and six top-10 finishes, but now she's chopped her scoring average from approximately 84.5 to 79 this year.

"She's learning to take some of those little blips and bumps in the road and taking them in stride a little bit more," said Williams, "which causes her to get over it a little quicker, be more resilient, bounce back a little quicker and kind of get on with things."

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"She's a little more patient," he said.

Monson works diligently on her game, always seeking to improve.

"I practice pretty much every day in the summer," she said. "But I think the biggest thing, I have more confidence this year. Last year I didn't have the confidence in my game."

Williams said Monson can belt a golf ball about 250 or 260 yards under ideal conditions and is consistently in the 220 to 230 range. "She can move it pretty well," he said.

College golf is split between fall and spring seasons. The NAIA national tournament will be held in May and Monson would like to finish as high as possible.

"I've thought about it a little," she said. "As long as I get in practices this winter, I should be in good position this spring, hopefully."