

The free drinks are on Cole Murdock.

Murdock fired a hole-in-one and claimed medalist honors Tuesday at Hunters Ridge as the Kennedy Cougars won their eighth straight district golf title.

Kennedy will compete for the state title this Friday and Saturday at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City.

Murdock aced the 16th hole at Hunters Ridge with a pitching wedge. The ball hit the bottom of the flag and dropped into the cup.

Murdock knew he hit a good shot, but did not realize the ball was in the hole.

"I've never had a hole-in-one, so I guess I've never really seen what it looks like going in from the distance," he said. "When I heard it hit the flag I was kind of looking around to see where it went."

It was especially good timing for Murdock, because Upper Iowa University golf coach Mike Lewis is recruiting Murdock and witnessed the shot.

"The Upper Iowa coach was actually following me today and kind of looking at me and he said it went in," Murdock related. "And I went, 'Oh my god, it did!' Then my dad went and looked and it was in the hole."

Written by Jim Ecker Tuesday, 07 October 2014 18:50 - Last Updated Tuesday, 07 October 2014 20:24

The 16th hole at Hunters Ridge is listed at 201 yards from the championship tees, but Murdock said the tee was moved up and the hole was actually about 140 yards Tuesday.

"I've always felt the pitching wedge was the best club in my bag and it was showing today, obviously," he said. "I don't miss with that club too often."

Murdock and Matthew Walker of Ottumwa both finished with even-par 72's under windy conditions. Murdock defeated Walker, the 2012 state champion and 2013 state runnerup, in a playoff for the district championship.

Conner Koberg fired a 2-over 74 for Kennedy and Davis Sutton shot a 4-over 76. The Cougars, normally an all-senior club, got a boost from junior Jordan Weiss, who cracked the lineup and submitted the team's fourth-best score with a 77 for a four-man total of 299.

Kennedy has finished second at the last two state meets. Now the five seniors in the lineup will be looking to end their prep careers in the winner's circle.



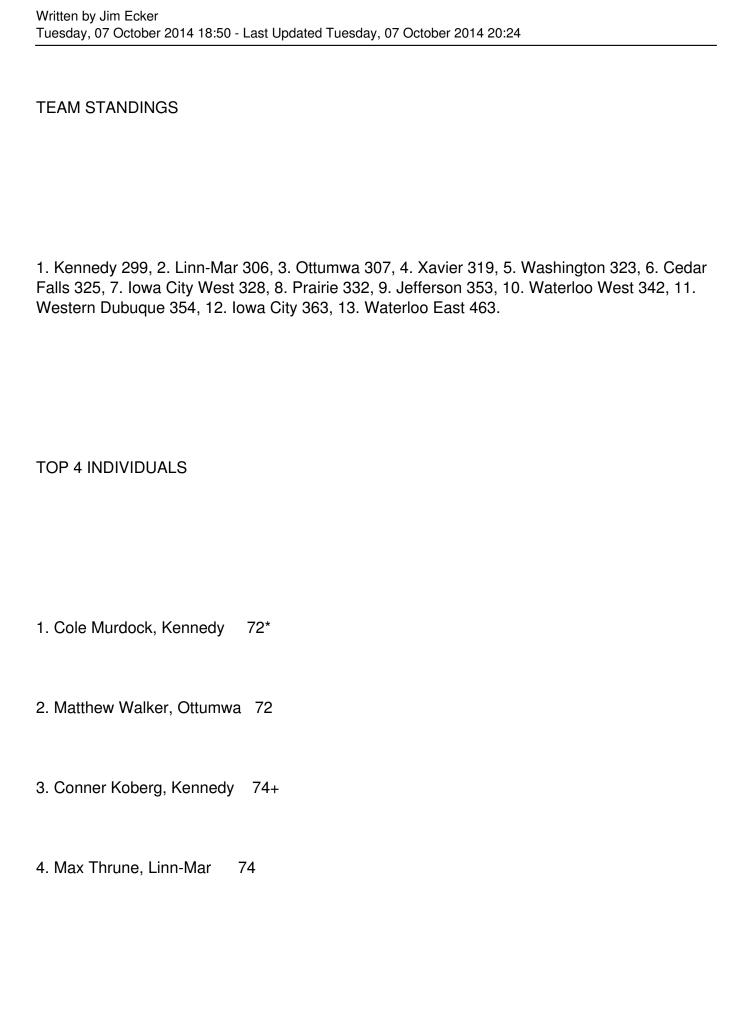
Kennedy Coach Mark Wilden does not plan any fire-and-brimstone speeches prior to the state meet. He'll talk about course management and mental toughness, but he does not plan to remind them of their second-place showings the last two years.

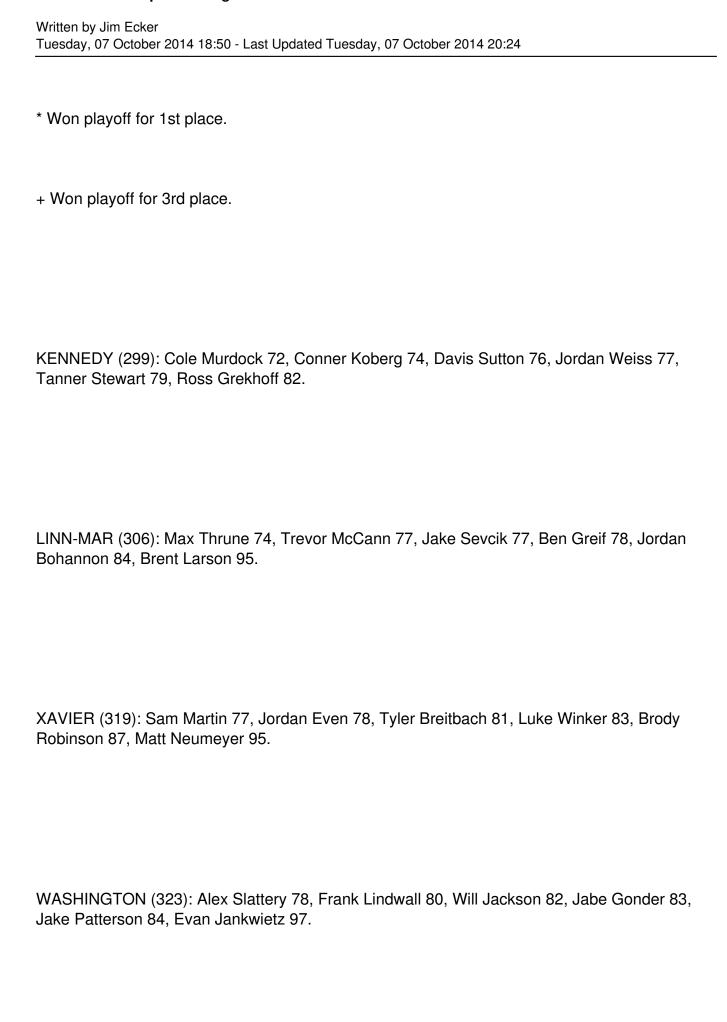
"No. They all know," he remarked. "It's constantly on our mind, but by the same token, that's something that we're proud of, too. Not a lot of people can do that (finish second)."

The Linn-Mar Lions had a good day on their home course Tuesday and placed second in the team standings at 306, seven shots behind Kennedy. Ottumwa placed third at 307 and will join

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Tuesday, 07 October 2014 18:50 - Last Updated Tuesday, 07 October 2014 20:24 Kennedy and Linn-Mar at the state meet. Max Thrune finished fourth in the individual standings for Linn-Mar with a 2-over 74. Trevor McCann and Jake Sevcik had 77's and Ben Greif shot a 78. Cedar Rapids Washington sophomore Frank Lindwall, who is ranked third in the state, shot an 8-over 80 Tuesday and did not qualify for the state meet. Twelve teams will compete at the Tournament Club of Iowa Friday and Saturday, beginning at 10:30 both days. Wilden thinks there are several teams that could win the title. "It could be Waukee, it could be West Des Moines Valley, it could be us," he said. "There's legitimately five or six teams. Whoever gets the hot hand." Wilden would love to see his talented senior class finish on top. "It would really be icing on the cake," he remarked. AT HUNTERS RIDGE Par-72





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PRAIRIE (332): Cooper Reittinger 76, Bryce Prokop 82, Cal Clark 86, Mitch Lorenz 88, Matt Lorenz 88, Blake Seda 121.

JEFFERSON (353): Kellen Brown 87, Nile Happel 88, Adam Van Oort 89, Reid Griffith 89, Carter Schmitz 99, Connor Hammons 109.