

Kamin bursts onto Metro golf scene

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 18 April 2012 20:43 - Last Updated Thursday, 19 April 2012 19:49



MJ Kamin got some funny looks from golfers on the other teams last spring when she competed in junior varsity meets for Cedar Rapids Washington as a freshman.

"It took about five holes before they said, 'Why aren't you playing varsity?,' and then I'd have to tell them the story," she related Wednesday at Airport National.

Kamin lives in the Kennedy school district and open-rolled at Washington, which meant she was not eligible for varsity competition as a ninth grader due to Cedar Rapids district rules.

"It was frustrating at first, but I kind of got used to playing JV," she said.

Kamin showed Wednesday that she's one of the top high school golfers in the Metro area by firing a 74 and finishing second at the CRANDIC tournament.

Jefferson senior Megan Furnish won the meet with a 7-over-par 72 in blustery conditions on the 3,760-yard course in southwest Cedar Rapids. Kamin played in the same group with Furnish and finished two strokes behind.

"I really like playing with her to see how I stack up against her. It's nice to know where I was in the group," said Kamin. "It's really helpful."

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Kamin attended Franklin Middle School, which sends about 75 percent of its students to Washington and the other 25 percent to Kennedy. And even though she lives in the Kennedy district, she wanted to join her friends at Washington. Her older brother Grant, a golfer and tennis player, also open-enrolled at Washington.



Furnish, who has signed to play golf at Missouri State, has been one of the premier golfers in the Metro for the past two years. Like Kamin, she also lives in the Kennedy district but open-enrolled as a frosh at Jefferson, where the majority of her friends from Taft Middle School went.

Kamin could challenge Furnish for top honors this season, and so could Ali Lindo of Cedar Rapids Kennedy.

Lindo shot a 75 Wednesday to finish in third place as Metro golfers placed 1-2-3 in a major meet against their peers from Iowa City.

Linn-Mar ran away with the team championship with a steady four-girl score of 326. Julie Pople led the Lions with an 80 and C.J. Davis, Rachel Thrune and Katie Harding all fired 82's to give Linn-Mar a 15-shot victory over Iowa City High.

Furnish had bogeys on three of her first four holes Wednesday morning in the worst of the weather, then settled down. She finished the round with 11 pars and seven bogeys.

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Furnish battled problems with her lower back last year, but she's undergone physical therapy and said she feels much better, with only an occasional twinge when she makes a bad swing. "I'm pretty good," she said.

She said she's worked on her "long swing" and swing path since last season, trying to hit the ball further and with more accuracy. "It's been good so far," she said. "I'd like to be consistent in my game."

Furnish said she gained confidence last summer by competing in national junior tournaments and is looking for a successful end to her prep career. She's never qualified for the state tournament and hopes to rectify that omission this spring.

"Hopefully third time is the charm," she said.

Kamin finished her round with one birdie, nine pars, six bogeys and two double-bogeys. One of the double-bogeys came on the par-3 third hole, which is only 122 yards long. She put her drive on the green but four-putted from 15 feet.

"It just kind of got away from me," she said.

If she had two-putted on that hole, she would have finished with a 72 and tied Furnish for medalist honors.

"I felt pretty good today," said Kamin, who carries a 4.3 GPA on a 4.0-scale at Washington. "I was hitting them really well. I just need to be a little bit better on my putting."

Kamin has the same goal as Furnish this year. "I would like to make it to state," she said.

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Maybe they'll battle their way to the same destination.

CRANDIC GOLF MEET

At Airport National

3,760 Yards, Par 65

Team Standings

1. Linn-Mar 326, 2. Iowa City High 341, 3. Iowa City West 344, 4. Prairie 351, 5. Kennedy 352, 6. Xavier 360, 7. Jefferson 373, 8. Washington 389, 9. Marion 391.

Top 10 Individuals

1. Megan Furnish, Jefferson, 72
2. MJ Kamin, Washington, 74
3. Ali Lindo, Kennedy, 75
4. Rachel Stewart, Iowa City High, 80
Julie Pople, Linn-Mar, 80
6. Olivia Ewing, Iowa City West, 81
7. C.J. Davis, Linn-Mar, 82
Rachel Thrune, Linn-Mar, 82
Katie Harding, Linn-Mar, 82
10. Madyson Boardman, Iowa City West 83

LINN-MAR (326): Julie Pople 80, C.J. Davis 82, Rachel Thrune 82, Katie Harding 82, Emma Lorenz 84, Danielle Toy 88.

PRAIRIE (351): Emily Perrin 84, Kerstin Flugum 85, Konnor Griffith 88, Alyssa Beisker 94, Jess Boldt 98, Jenna Niccolls 100.

KENNEDY (352): Ali Lindo 75, Sadie Schultz 91, Hannah Harberts 93, Raemi Chavez 93, Amanda Wiedemeier 104, Breanna Osterkamp 104.

XAVIER (360): Grace Winker 86, Taylor Wertzberger 88, Morgan DeLong 92, Hailey Sojka 94, Lisa Olberding 94, Kara Zwanziger 94.

JEFFERSON (373): Megan Furnish 72, Marissa Fehlhafer 102, Megan Kibby 103, Emily Aukes 96, Sammy Seeman 107, Sarah Tortora 114.

WASHINGTON (389): MJ Kamin 74, Kandis O'Donnell 102, Elizaberth Stanczyk 103, Sophia Ochs 110, Katherine Wohlers 11, Hannah Bott 121.

MARION (391): Ashley Reed 88, Taylor Wade 91, Heather McGuire 105, Ashley Ohl 107, Kaitie Connelly 115, Haley Shaffer 128.