

Murdock's ace sparks Cougars to district title

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 07 October 2014 18:50



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.

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"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."

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.

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"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 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

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Par-72

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Kennedy 299, 2. Linn-Mar 306, 3. Ottumwa 307, 4. Xavier 319, 5. Washington 323, 6. Cedar Falls 325, 7. Iowa City West 328, 8. Prairie 332, 9. Jefferson 353, 10. Waterloo West 342, 11. Western Dubuque 354, 12. Iowa City 363, 13. Waterloo East 463.

TOP 4 INDIVIDUALS

1. Cole Murdock, Kennedy 72*

2. Matthew Walker, Ottumwa 72

3. Conner Koberg, Kennedy 74+

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4. Max Thrune, Linn-Mar 74

* Won playoff for 1st place.

+ Won playoff for 3rd place.

KENNEDY (299): Cole Murdock 72, Conner Koberg 74, Davis Sutton 76, Jordan Weiss 77, Tanner Stewart 79, Ross Grekhoff 82.

LINN-MAR (306): Max Thrune 74, Trevor McCann 77, Jake Sevcik 77, Ben Greif 78, Jordan Bohannon 84, Brent Larson 95.

XAVIER (319): Sam Martin 77, Jordan Even 78, Tyler Breitbach 81, Luke Winker 83, Brody Robinson 87, Matt Neumeyer 95.

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WASHINGTON (323): Alex Slattery 78, Frank Lindwall 80, Will Jackson 82, Jabe Gonder 83, Jake Patterson 84, Evan Jankwietz 97.

PRAIRIE (332): Cooper Reitinger 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.