

Cougars hold off Saints at CRANDIC

Written by Tom Fruehling

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On a day in which scores were higher than expected, Kennedy was carried by medalist Cody Bell to its fifth straight championship of the CRANDIC boys golf tournament Tuesday at Hunters Ridge Golf Course.

It was an ideal day for golf, or most anything else: Sunny and dry, moderately cool and near windless.

The third-ranked Cougars, state runner-up last year, won with a score of 321, two strokes ahead of a resurgent Xavier group.

Jefferson recorded a solid team effort to finish a surprising third at 329, one shot better than host Linn-Mar in the eight-team field.

The tournament favorite, Bell recorded back-to-back scores of 38 en route to a 4-over 76 to claim individual honors. Xavier senior JP King came in second with a 78, and senior teammate Jason Beer was a stroke back at 79 to tie for third with Jefferson senior Eric Lehmkuhl. Beer led after nine holes with a 37, despite taking a double-bogey 7 on the second hole.

Rounding out the top individual finishes and tied for fifth place with scores of 81 were seniors Tyler Kalina of Kennedy, Tyler McCann and Kyle Hackett of Linn-Mar and juniors Ben Otis of Jefferson and Rob Thiness of Xavier.

Both Bell and his coach Mark Wilden said the immaculately-groomed Hunters Ridge course seemed to play longer than usual despite the near-perfect conditions.

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"If you would have told me this morning that a score of 321 would win this tournament, I would have said you were crazy," Wilden said. "Frankly, I'm shocked that we won. But I'm very pleased that we won."

Wilden said the fairways were a little more damp than they had been when his team recorded a score of 319 in the Linn-Mar Invitational earlier in the year.

"The course was softer today, so you didn't get a lot roll," Wilden said. "That changes everything."

Beer recovered from a double bogey on the first hole of the day when he hit a 4-iron out of bounds.

"I was able to put that out of my mind and get back par golf," he said. "The course was playing longer today, but I used length off the tees to my advantage."

Beer nailed 14 of 18 greens and, except for the rocky start, remained steady all day.

Jefferson Coach Steve Koepke was thrilled that his J-Hawks came in third.

"It was a bit of a surprise, since we haven't competed in two weeks," he said. "We took Friday off so the guys could show up in force at the Jeff sophomore football game, then had a three-day break over the holiday."

"But I told them at the team breakfast to stay positive. Finishing in third place in this field, I think, shows the power of positive thinking."

CRANDIC TOURNAMENT

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At Hunters Ridge (Par-72)

Teams - 1. Kennedy 321, 2. Xavier 323, 3. Jefferson 329, 4. Linn-Mar 330, 5. Iowa City High 340, 6. Iowa City West 346, 7. Prairie 346, 8. Washington 355

Top 10 finishers

Cody Bell, CRK	38-38--76
JP King, CRX	38-40--78
Jason Beer, CRX	37-42--79
Eric Lehmkuhl, CRJ	39-40--79
Ben Otis, CRJ	38-43--81
Tyler Kalina, CRK	35-46--81
Rob Thinnes, CRX	40-41--81
Tyler McCann, LM	38-43--81
Kyle Hackett, LM	41-40--81
Mitch Willems, CRJ	39-43--82
Brigham Stewart, CRK	37-45--82
Harrison Moore, CRK	38-44--82
Colyn Snyder, CRP	42-40--82

KENNEDY (321): Cody Bell 76, Tyler Kalina 81, Brigham Stewart 82, Harrison Moore 82, Mitchell Martin 83, Jake Wilding 92

XAVIER (323): JP King 78, Jason Beer 79, Rob Thinnes 81, Matt Junge 85, Ben Sagers 89, Ben McDermott 96

JEFFERSON (329): Eric Lehmkuhl 79, Ben Otis 81, Mitch Willems 82, Zach Denny 87, Gavin Williams 93, Colten Jourdan 102

LINN-MAR (330): Tyler McCann 81, Kyle Hackett 81, Trevor Berry 83, Clay Vieth 85, Mark Drake 85, Drew McGovern 85

IOWA CITY HIGH (340): Grant Simpson 84, Trent Bedford 84, Ryan Duncan 86, Patrick Jordan 86, Nate Goddard 87, Coale Cooper 92

IOWA CITY WEST (346): Drew Haas 86, Anthony Lehnertz 86, Dominic Muzzin 87, Tyler Whitehead 87, Noah Federici 88, Joe Scott 92

PRAIRIE (346): Colyn Snyder 82, Mitch Wagner 83, att Edl 88, Drew Digman 93, Jared Smith 94, Brooks Kehoe 103

WASHINGTON (355): Matt Starnd 87, Austin Bergstrom 88, Dominic Rodriguez 90, Jon Landis 90, John Kopec 91, Zach Gothard 97