

Bell keeps his cool, wins district golf title

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 04 October 2011 19:25 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 October 2011 23:55

CEDAR FALLS - Cody Bell is unflappable.

Some golfers might lose their cool after missing two short putts at the start of an important round, but not Bell. He shrugged it off and surged to the top.

Bell claimed medalist honors with a 1-over-par 73 Tuesday to help Kennedy win the Class 4A district golf title at Pheasant Ridge Golf Course in Cedar Falls.

Bell missed a 3-foot birdie putt on the 570-yard second hole and had to settle for par. Then he missed another short putt on the 420-yard fourth hole and took a bogey.

He never tossed a club or uttered an unhappy word. His only visible sign of annoyance was a small grimace.

"It was just a matter of settling in," he said. "You have those nerves going in, but I was able to settle in and I was able to salvage the round."

Bell collected four birdies after his slow start and beat Linn-Mar senior Tyler McCann by one stroke.

"Cody is just an unusual individual. He doesn't let things bother him," Kennedy Coach Mark Wilden said. "He has a great temperament."

Bell played the first nine holes at 2-over par, then played the back nine at 1-under for his tight victory.

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"I'm proud of it," he said. "I felt like I came out here and competed with everyone else. I hit the ball really well. That was the key to my success."

Kennedy, Cedar Falls and Linn-Mar qualified for the Class 4A state meet at Finkbine Golf Course in Iowa City this Friday and Saturday. They will be part of an elite field that will feature 12 of the top-15 teams in Iowa.

Xavier finished fourth in the team standings and failed to qualify for state by eight shots, but Xavier senior J.P. King tied for fourth in the individual race with a 76 and advanced.

Kennedy posed for a team picture after winning the district title, but the Cougars viewed Tuesday's meet as a stepping-stone toward the ultimate prize. The top three teams in each district advanced to the state tournament, and everybody will start fresh when they get to Finkbine on Friday.

"I was just hoping to finish in the top-3 (at districts)," Wilden remarked. "To win it is a bonus.

"Winning a district championship is always a great thing to do, but really it's the state tournament that we're looking for."

Kennedy has won district titles before - "This is like our fourth or fifth in row," Wilden said - so there was no big celebration Tuesday. There's still work to do.

The Cougars finished third at the state meet in 2008, fourth in 2009 and second in 2010. They'd like to finish the job this year.

"I think we have the pieces," Bell remarked. "We just all need to be clicking at the same time."

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Harrison Moore shot a 4-over-par 76 for Kennedy to help lead the charge to state. Jake Wilding fired a 77 and Mitchell Martin contributed a 78 to complete the team scoring. Brigham Stewart shot 79 and Tyler Kalina had an 80, but they weren't needed in the standings.

There were four district meets around the state Tuesday and all of the teams ranked 1 through 9 in the latest poll advanced. That includes No. 1 Ankeny, No. 2 West Des Moines Valley, No. 3 Dowling Catholic, No. 4 Ames, No. 5 Kennedy, No. 6 Waukee, No. 7 Ottumwa, No. 8 Cedar Falls and No. 9 Muscatine.

The Xavier Saints, ranked 10th, were the only member of the top-10 that failed to advance. The rest of the state tournament field includes No. 11 Linn-Mar, No. 13 Iowa City High and No. 15 Bettendorf.

"I think we are a legitimate contender," Wilden said. "We've already beaten some of those teams. The two teams that we need to prove ourselves against would be Ankeny and West Des Moines Valley, and I think we can play with both of those teams.

"A lot of quality teams are going to be down there," he said. "No sloughs are going to be down there."

Kennedy finished the district tournament at 305, with Cedar Falls at 306 and Linn-Mar at 310. The Lions are returning to state for the first time since 2008, fulfilling a team goal.

Several of Linn-Mar's golfers got off to slow starts Tuesday, but held it together and had strong finishes.

"They showed a lot of pride today," Linn-Mar Coach Steve Kahler said. "We knew it was going to be a dogfight and they really came out and performed very well. They showed some character."

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Tyler McCann led the way for Linn-Mar with his 2-over-par 74. Clay Vieth shot a 77, followed by Trevor Berry (79), Mark Drake (80), Kyle Hackett (85) and Trevor McCann (86).

Cedar Rapids Washington finished in seventh place and Cedar Rapids Jefferson was 12th.

Cedar Rapids Prairie placed seventh at the 4A district at Glynn's Creek Golf Course in Long Grove Tuesday and failed to qualify for state. The top three teams at Glynn's Creek were Muscatine, Iowa City High and Bettendorf.

CLASS 4A DISTRICT MEET

At Cedar Falls

(Pheasant Ridge, par 72)

Top 3 teams and top 4 individuals (plus ties) qualify for state meet Oct. 7-8 at Finkbine Golf Course in Iowa City.

Team Standings

1. Kennedy 304, 2. Cedar Falls 305, 3. Linn-Mar 310, 4. Xavier 318, 5. Hempstead 320, 6. Waterloo West 323, 7. Washington 329, 8. Mason City 332, 9. Marshalltown 333, 10. Dubuque Senior 339, 11. Wahlert 342, 12. Jefferson 346, 13. Waterloo East 402.

Top 10 Individuals

1. Cody Bell, Kennedy	73
2. Tyler McCann, Linn-Mar	74
3. Andy Kloos, Cedar Falls	75
4. J.P. King, Xavier	76
Harrison Moore, Kennedy	76
Carson Hillery, Hempstead	76
Wil Hunemuller, Cedar Falls	76
8. Jacob Bermel, Cedar Falls	77
Jon Skarlis, Cedar Falls	77
Jake Wilding, Kennedy	77
Clay Vieth, Linn-Mar	77

KENNEDY (304): Cody Bell 73, Harrison Moore 76, Jake Wilding 77, Mitchell Martin 78, Brigham Stewart 79, Tyler Kalina 80

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LINN-MAR (310): Tyler McCann 74, Clay Vieth 77, Trevor Berry 79, Mark Drake 80, Kyle Hackett 85, Trevor McCann 86

XAVIER (318): J.P. King 76, Ben Sagers 79, Rob Thinnies 81, Matt Junge 82, Ben McDermott 84, Jason Beer 88

WASHINGTON (329): Austin Bergstrom 79, Dominic Rodriguez 79, Matt Strand 84, Zach Gothard 87, Jon Landis 87, John Kopec 89

JEFFERSON (346): Zach Denny 84, Colten Jourdan 84, Eric Lehmkuhl 89, Ben Otis 89, Gavin Williams 89