

Saints headed to state golf for 1st time

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 01 October 2012 20:44 -

The Kennedy Cougars were playing for more than just themselves Monday when they captured the Class 4A district golf title at Elmcrest Country Club.

They were playing for Drew Wall, their courageous teammate who has been battling cancer for five years and has already lost the lower part of his right leg to the disease.

The Cougars wore special purple shirts with the initials "D.W." on the front and "Drew" on the back. They also wore a purple ribbon on their caps, with purple chosen because it's symbolic of the fight against cancer.

"It was real cool to see the team do that for me," said Wall, who attended the meet. "I'm extremely humbled and thankful and grateful. It's a big honor."

Kennedy won the district title with a four-man total of 300 with balanced scoring from Harrison Moore (74), Cole Murdock (74), Kyle Custer (75) and Davis Sutton (77).

The Cougars posted a comfortable 10-shot victory over Ottumwa to claim a spot in the state meet this Friday and Saturday at the Tournament Club of Iowa in Polk City.

The Xavier Saints earned the third and final berth in the state meet with a four-man score of 312. This will be Xavier's first trip to the state tournament in school history. Matt Junge led the Saints with a 6-over-par 76.

"The goal was to come here and compete for the district title, but the first trip to state sounds pretty good to me," said Xavier Coach Tim O'Brien. "I'm pretty excited about that."

Ottumwa sophomore Matthew Walker claimed medalist honors with an even-par 70. Moore and Murdock tied for second at 4-over 74, then Moore defeated Murdock in a one-hole playoff for

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the silver medal.

Kennedy dominated the district meet with four golfers in the top-8 of the individual standings, but they all stayed in the crowd and elected Wall to represent them at the awards ceremony to collect their championship banner and medals.

Wall received a round of applause from the spectators, many of whom know his story and his determination to fight back.

"It was special," he said. "The entire team wasn't only playing for Kennedy, but playing for me. I thought that was just amazing that they would do that."

Wall has undergone numerous operations the last few years as well as chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Doctors recently found a new tumor in his left lung and a cancerous growth on his left hip, complicating his recovery from surgery to remove a tumor from his right lung earlier this season.

Kennedy Coach Mark Wilden suggested the team dedicate the district meet to Wall and the Cougars readily agreed, suggesting the purple shirts.

"We want him to know that he's important to us and an important part of the team," said Wilden. "There's more to the world than golf and games. It's about him."

The Cougars appreciated having Wall by their side Monday. "I think that him coming out today was really great," said Moore.

A few weeks ago, Wall visited the White House and had his picture taken with President Obama as Iowa's representative for the Children's Miracle Network. One "champion" from each state was chosen for the special trip to Washington, D.C., and all 50 champions posed in a group shot with Obama.

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"I got a high-5 from the president," said Wall, smiling. "It was great."

Wall also went to Disneyworld in Orlando, Fla., as part of the Children's Miracle Network celebration and got to play a hole of golf on a local course. He had his picture taken on the course and was able to relate his story about the fight against cancer.

Wall said he has a persistent cough and said his left hip is a little sore, but otherwise had no complaints.

"I'm not bad," he said. "I'm just a little tired."

CLASS 4A DISTRICT GOLF

At Elmcrest Country Club

Par-70

TEAM STANDINGS

(Top 3 Teams Qualify for State)

1. Kennedy 300, 2. Ottumwa 310, 3. Xavier 312, 4. Waterloo West 321, 5. Dubuque Wahlert 332, 6. Washington 333, 7. Jefferson 334, 8. Linn-Mar 338, 9. Dubuque Senior 344, 10. Dubuque Hempstead 345, 11. Cedar Falls 347, 12. Prairie 352, 13. Waterloo East 504.

TOP 10 INDIVIDUALS

(Top 4 Individuals and Ties Qualify for State)

1. Matthew Walker, Ottumwa	70
2. *Harrison Moore, Kennedy	74
3. Cole Murdock, Kennedy	74
4. Kyle Custer, Kennedy	75
Jared Deines, Cedar Falls	75
6. Collin Trenkamp, Waterloo West	76
Matt Junge, Xavier	76
8. Davis Sutton, Kennedy	77
Ben Sagers, Xavier	77
10. Zach Gothard, Washington	78
John Ingwersen, Xavier	78
Jacob Gardner, Ottumwa	78

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* Won Playoff for 2nd Place

KENNEDY (300): Harrison Moore 74, Cole Murdock 74, Kyle Custer 75, Davis Sutton 77, Conner Koberg 80, Tanner Stewart 86.

XAVIER (312): Matt Junge 76, Ben Sagers 77, John Ingwersen 78, Robbie Thinnes 81, John Drahozal 81, Jordan Even 81.

WASHINGTON (333): Zach Gothard 78, Dominic Rodriguez 82, Matt Strand 86, Jon Landis 87, Evan Jankwietz 91, Austin Bergstrom 97.

JEFFERSON (334): Zach Denny 81, Ben Otis 83, Jake Van Oort 83, Mitch Willems 87, Michael Loboda 89, Jake Hansen 92.

LINN-MAR (338): Trevor McCann 81, Jason Gingrich 82, Jacob Sevcik 87, Drew McGovern 88, Bobby Charlton 90, Kile Bean 95.

PRAIRIE (352): Cal Clark 85, Harry Knutson 87, Matt Edl 90, Blake Seda 90, Cooper Reitinger 90, Drew Digman 91.