

Sagers leads Saints to MVC golf title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 09 August 2012 21:30 -

DUBUQUE - Xavier golf coach Tim O'Brien strolled into the high school gym Wednesday in search of history.

He knew the Saints had won a Mississippi Valley Conference title a few years ago and wanted to refresh his memory, just in case his team finished in first place again this year.

"I walked in there last night just to look at the banner, and it was 2001," O'Brien said proudly Thursday afternoon.

Now that old banner has a companion.

Ben Sagers fired a 3-under-par 68 Thursday as Xavier captured the MVC Super Meet by nine shots at the Bunker Hill Golf Course in Dubuque.

Sagers finished three shots ahead of the pack to claim medalist honors and help the Saints claim their first MVC title in 11 years.

"It's a good way to start the year," O'Brien remarked. "It's early, though."

The Saints gave a hint of things to come when they dominated the Rotary Pribyl junior tournament in Cedar Rapids last week when they claimed five spots in the top-9, including a 1-2 finish by John Ingwersen and Matt Junge.

They displayed similar strength at the MVC Super Meet by taking four spots in the top-12. Junge finished third, Robbie Thinnies placed 11th and Jordan Even was 12th.

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Those four men gave the Saints a 72-hole score of 290, good for a nine-shot victory over the Kennedy Cougars. As a further sign of strength, the Saints did not need to count Ingwersen's score of 9-over 78 in their total. He was the Pribyl champ, but was only fifth-best player on his own team Thursday.

"I was really pleased with our performance," O'Brien said. "The kids have come off a nice summer tournament run.

"Today was about what these kids have done in the offseason. They are diligent workers. It's a hard-working team. It didn't just magically happen for us. These kids have dedicated themselves."

The Mississippi Valley Conference begins the season with the Super Meet, with all 14 schools competing for the top prize. The Saints were delighted to grab it.

"We've always been trying to catch Kennedy," Sagers remarked. "This year I think we can do it. I think we can do whatever we put our minds to."

The Saints caught and passed the Cougars Thursday, but the most important meets will be held in October with the district and state competition.

Sagers, a junior, had four birdies, one bogey and a double-bogey on the 17th hole when he landed in a fairway bunker, hit the ball over the green and out of bounds. Otherwise, he enjoyed his walk at Bunker Hill.

"I like the tee shots," he said. "It fits the way I work the ball. I feel pretty comfortable in the tee boxes."

Sagers likes to work the ball from right to left, and he certainly likes Bunker Hill, having carded an even-par 69 here before. He didn't think his 1-under 68 would be good enough for medalist

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honors, but enjoyed being wrong.

"I thought something under par would probably get you second place," he said, "but the pins were tough and the scores were a little higher."

O'Brien thought the pin placements were a little on the mischievous side, which made Sagers' round special. "That 68 to me was real impressive," the coach said.

Kennedy has been a golf powerhouse in recent years, but the Cougars graduated most of their top players and sent Cody Bell (UNI) and Brigham Stewart (Butler) to the world of collegiate golf. In their place, the young Cougars put five sophomores and one junior on the course Thursday to compete against the best golfers in the league.

Kennedy would have won a sophomore golf meet with ease as Conner Koberg (72), Davis Sutton (75), Ross Grekoff (76) and Seth Nutt (76) combined to shoot 299. All four of them are 10th graders with promising futures.

"I'll take that in the first meet," Kennedy Coach Mark Wilden remarked after the Cougars grabbed second place.

Linn-Mar finished third in the team standings at 304 as Metro teams placed 1-2-3 at the top of the league. Sophomore Trevor McCann shot a 3-over-par 72 to lead the Lions and take fourth.

Sophomore Zach Denny shot a 5-over 74 for Jefferson to finish ninth in the individual standings.

MVC SUPER MEET
Bunker Hill, Dubuque
Par 69

Team Scores

1. Xavier 290, 2. Kennedy 299, Linn-Mar 304, 4. Wahlert 305, 5. Cedar Falls 309, 6. Iowa City

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West 311, 7. Jefferson 313, 8. Dubuque Senior 313, 9. Waterloo West 314, 10. Washington 317, 11. Dubuque Hempstead 326, 12. Prairie 326, 13. Iowa City High 336, 14. Waterloo East 392.

Top 12 Individuals

1. Ben Sagers, Xavier	68
2. Tyler Whitehead, IC West	71
3. Matt Junge, Xavier	72
4. Trevor McCann, Linn-Mar	72
5. Conner Koberg, Kennedy	72
6. Alec Braun, Cedar Falls	73
7. Nick Psihoyos, Dubuque Sr.	73
8. Christian Rapp, Wahlert	73
9. Zach Denny, Jefferson	74
10. Davis Sutton, Kennedy	75
11. Robbie Thinnes, Xavier	75
12. Jordan Even, Xavier	75

(Note: All ties broken by card-back.)

XAVIER: Ben Sagers 68, Matt Junge 72, Robbie Thinnes 75, Jordan Even 75, John Drahozal 77, John Ingwersen 78.

KENNEDY: Conner Koberg 72, Davis Sutton 75, Ross Grekoff 76, Sam Nutt 76, Cole Murdock 77, Quinn Jamrock 82.

LINN-MAR: Trevor McCann 72, Elliott Siefert 77, Kile Bean 77, Jason Gingrich 78, Drew McGovern 81, Jacob Sevcik 86.

JEFFERSON: Zach Denny 74, Mitch Willems 77, Ben Otis 78, Jake Van Oort 84, Michael Loboda 90, Zach Khorsand 95.

WASHINGTON: Dominic Rodriguez 77, Matt Strand 78, Austin Bergstrom 81, Zach Gothard 81, Jon Landis 85, Jeffrey Nassif 92.

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PRAIRIE: Matt Edl 77, Blake Seda 81, Drew Digman 83, Copper Reitinger 85, Ryan Doser 86, Cal Clark 93.