



## SPRIT SPORTS & LEISURE

### Talented Golfers Keep Kenston On Course for Success

By Dan Murray

It hasn't taken long for Kenston sophomore Nicki Henry and Bomber senior Zack Bates to get in the swing of things this golf season.

Henry, who has played golf since the tender age of five, is one of the top girls' players in Northeast Ohio this fall. She has already set an 18-hole school record for Kenston, which won its first tournament in school history last month.

And Henry's counterpart on the Bomber boys' team, Bates, is also off to a fast start to the new season. Bates has emerged as medalist in three of the team's tournaments and is averaging just over 74 strokes per 18-hole round.

Henry's school record round of 73 came during the Eagle Invitational at Candywood Golf Course. She posted a score of 41 on the front nine and then caught fire on the back nine with a round of 32 to finish as the tournament's low scorer. Henry was also second at the Aurora Invitational with a round of 81 and first at the Mentor Invitational at a tough Fowler's Mill course, finishing with an 89.

In the team's first dual match of the season, Henry posted a 39 as the Bombers bested host Solon at Grantwood.

"Nicki was the number two golfer for us as a freshman last season and missed going to state by just one shot at the district tournament," said Kenston head coach Katie Macko. "She played a lot of Northcoast Tour tournaments over the summer and played at a tournament in West Palm Beach."

Henry stands just 5-2 but hits the ball with authority off the tee. Coming from a golfing family, she is a rising star in Ohio high school golf.

"She knows the game very well and now she has added a lot of yardage to her clubs," said Macko. "She's been killing the ball."

Henry is also known as the "walking rule book" for her knowledge of the rules of golf.

"She's only a sophomore but has stepped up as a team leader," said Macko, who named Henry as a team co-captain. "She has even helped the other players on the team with their games."

Kenston has set a team goal of advancing to the Division I state tournament later this season and Henry appears to be one of the favorites to make it to Columbus as an individual. The team, which won the Chagrin



Nicki Henry

Valley Conference title last year, is deeper than last year's squad. "We have a good group of girls, they're very dedicated," said Macko.

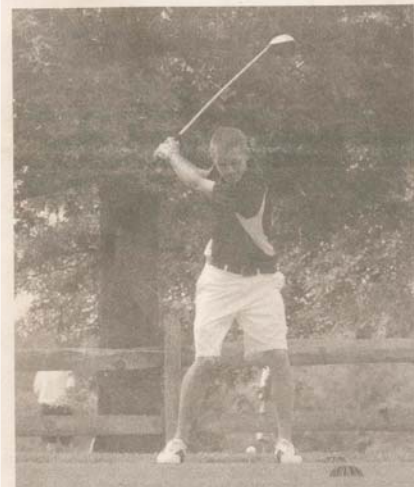
Bates comes into the new season as the Bombers' top player on the boys' team and his top round of the season came at the Kenston Invitational at Punderson when he shot a round of 70 from the back tees.

Bates added a 72 at Walden at the Aurora Invitational and was low scorer at the Mentor Invitational at Fowler's Mill with a score of 76. In a dual match against Beachwood at Punderson, he shot a 38.

"Zack really has an excellent short game and he's worked a lot on his irons, which are more accurate," said Kenston coach Don Torma. "He played a lot of junior golf this summer, including some out of state tournaments and at the Hudson Invitational."

Bates, who has a goal of advancing to the Division I state tournament in Columbus, has already drawn the interest of schools such as Xavier, Dayton and Louisville. "He wants to play golf for a Division I school," said Torma.

A student of the game, Bates has also improved on keeping his emotions in check, a key for any golfer. After



Zach Bates

working at Sand Ridge, he has developed a more compact swing, improving his control of the ball.

Both Henry and Bates will be at the forefront of this season's top players in the golf-rich Northeast Ohio area.