

Kenston Girls Shoot for Spot at State Tournament

By Dan Murray

The Kenston girls' golf team has an important goal for the new season – to advance to the state tournament in October.

That goal is within reach this year as the Bombers return their entire lineup from last season's squad which placed seventh in the competitive district tournament. The talent is there for Kenston, it will be a question of mental toughness, according to coach Katie Phillips.

"Our big goal is to finish in the top four at the district," said Phillips. "You can already see a big difference in our team scores. Our players know they can play well on the tougher courses. Right now we're working on the players' confidence."

Junior standout Nicki Henry will once again lead the Bombers as one of the top players in Northeast Ohio. The 5-4 Henry has always been a top short game player and a great putter and she is now adding some distance to her game as well.

"Nicki has been working out on her strength conditioning," said Phillips. "She already looks much stronger than at this time last year. She is stronger mentally as well; if she has a bad hole she makes up for it later in the round."

Henry won a Northcoast Junior Tour event at Blackbrook Country Club in Mentor this summer, posting a round of 77. She was the medalist in last year's Chagrin Valley Conference Tournament with a round of 79 as Kenston won its second straight CVC title. The Bombers are the prohibitive favorites for their fourth CVC championship in the past five years.

At last year's district tournament at the Legends in Massillon, Henry shot a round of 87 in poor weather conditions to miss a state berth by a single stroke. "Last year she let that course get to her," said Phillips. "That won't happen this year."

The Bombers returned to the Legends course last month, finishing eight of 18 teams at the Massillon Invitational. Henry posted a round of 79 and was followed by senior Lauren O'Connor (96), junior Ali Read (98), senior Eleni Seminario (102) and sophomore Tess Ferguson (104).

Kenston set a new school record for an 18-hole event at the Lady Eagle Invitational held at Candywood Golf Course last month. The Bombers shot a team score of 337 and placed fifth out of 27 teams with Henry shooting a 78, Seminario carding an 84, Read posting an 85 and O'Connor shooting a 90. Henry shot a school record 73 at Candywood last season.

Henry was the medalist at the Blue Streak Invitational at Sweetbriar, shooting a 75 and winning a two-hole playoff. Seminario added a 98, O'Connor shot 103 and Read shot a 107.

The Bombers were 5-0 in the conference and 12-0 in dual matches last season before going on to finish second at the sectional tourney at Cortland. The big hurdle was the district tournament and that event will hold the key to the season again this year.

"If we can get some consistent play at the district that could make the difference," said Phillips.



Nicki Henry