

Spirit of Bainbridge

SPIRIT SPORTS

Kenston Girls Compete in State Tournaments

By Dan Murray

After two near-misses, Kenston junior Nicki Henry finally made it to the Division I state golf tournament this season.

Henry missed advancing from the regional tournament by a single shot in each of the past two years. This season she left little doubt by winning the district at the Legends of Massillon course with a strong round of 76. That made her the first Bomber player to advance to the girls' state tournament.

That set Henry up as one of the favorites for the state tournament at Ohio State University's Gray Course. The event was pared down to a single 18-hole round and Henry ended up carding a 78, good for a 10th place, five shots out of first place.

"Just missing making it to state my first two years pushed me to work harder to qualify this year," said Henry. "The conditions weren't that great at state but it felt very good to be there and it was an exciting experience."

Henry ended up as a Second Team All-Ohio selection for her performance. The Bombers' number one player, who holds the school record of 73, did as much off the course this season as she did on it through her work with the Bright Side of the Road Foundation.

For each birdie she recorded this season, Henry's sponsors made donations in the name of ALS (Lou Gherig's Disease), a disease her grandmother has. Henry raised over \$1,000 for breast cancer last year and has already raised over \$8,000 for ALS this year, thanks to a barrage of 55 birdies heading into the state tournament.

Those who wish to continue to help Henry can visit her website at Nickihenry.com. All donations go directly to the Cleveland Clinic. She will continue with the program during her senior season next year, when she will be on of the top players in the state again.

"I've really grown as a player by learning how to scramble when things get tough on the course," she said. "I'm able to hold it together even on a bad day."

While inclement weather was making things difficult on the golfers, the Division I state tennis tournament was also affected by the rain. Kenston's Victoria and Mandy Marchant made the trip to Columbus but ended up playing indoors at the Elysium Tennis Center in Plain City.

The Marchants dropped a tough first-round match to Ashleigh Witte and Tori Turner of West Chester Lakota in a confrontation that lasted three sets.

Mandy, a freshman, was the second singles champion at the Chagrin Valley Conference Tournament. She knocked off fellow state qualifier Anna Benson of Chagrin Falls.

Victoria, a junior, placed fourth at first singles in the CVC tourney. With both players back for the Bombers next year, another CVC title is a distinct possibility.

The Marchants won a sectional title and made the Final Four at this year's district tournament. They fell in the semifinals to Revere's Natalie Robson and Brittany Miller by scores of 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 but bounced back to take third in the district with a 6-3, 6-2 win over North Canton Hoover's Kaitlin Kennelly and Lauren Rife.

