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## HIGH SCHOOL STATE GOLF

# Area golfers show improvement, but weekend was not a total loss

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COLUMBUS — Just about everyone improved from last year to this year, but the improvement wasn't enough.

Teams and individuals from the Northeast Ohio area returned home empty-handed from the Division I state golf tournament Saturday, but it would be incorrect to say the weekend was a total loss.

The St. Ignatius boys improved on last year's third-place finish, finishing second to repeat winner Columbus St. Charles by 11 shots. Highland's girls finished fourth to Mason after coming in eighth in 2009.

And, they lost to record-setting performances.

St. Charles, with senior Michael Ricaurte winning medalist honors with a two-day total of 2-over 144, won the boys title with a record 610. That was 11 shots better than St. Ignatius on Saturday, and one shot better than the previous course record set by Upper Arlington in 1993 and equaled by St. Ignatius when it won in 2002 on the Scarlet Course.

Mason, led by medalist and Wake Forest recruit Emily Wright's 36-hole score of 2-over 142, became the first team to win three straight girls titles, and the Comets did so with a record 611. That obliterated the Gray Course record of 630, set by Dublin Coffman in 2000 and matched by Mason in 2008.

St. Ignatius and Highland also had the best individual finishes by an area player. Junior Beau Titsworth shot the day's low round of 1-over 72 on Saturday for a two-day runner-up total of 147, three shots behind Ricaurte.

Battling a cold, sophomore Jessica Porvasnik was not as sharp as her opening 70 on Friday, but finished as the runner-up at 7-over 147, five shots behind Wright.

In the team races, the boys from Medina and Stow improved on their showings of last



ED MATTHEWS / COLUMBUS DISPATCH

St. Ignatius junior Beau Titsworth shot the best round of the day to finish second at the high school state golf tournament in Columbus on Saturday.

year. While Medina stumbled to fifth at 653, it was better than last year's ninth-place finish. Stow improved from 12th in 2009 to seventh (659) this year behind senior Cody Nickson's 153.

"St. Charles got out of the gate and they just started running," said St. Ignatius coach Terry Hopkins, whose team cut into a 16-stroke deficit after the first round by shooting a 301 on Saturday, the low round of the tournament.

"It was real difficult to try and make up 16 swings. We made a move on our back nine and I thought, 'OK, something crazy could happen and we could turn this around.' But St. Charles

improved over last year, when it shot 350 when the event was limited to 18 holes because of inclement weather. The performance was not a downer for coach Mary Becker.

"Every kid improved their scores from last year, and having our top four players back next year with a year's experience is what we have to think about," said Becker, who loses only senior Sarah Sniff. "I know the kids are a little disappointed, but Mason got hot at the right time. It seemed like we were hot a week or two too early."

Juniors Stephanie Horvath (157) and Lauren McKinzie (161) and sophomore Jessica McRae (174) completed Highland's scoring.

Kenston's Nicki Henry, reigning Plain Dealer player of the year, improved on her 10th place finish of last year by shooting 153, good for a tie for fifth, and Hudson's Natalie Goodson, 24th last year, finished in a tie for eighth at 154.

After sharing the first-round lead, Porvasnik got off to a rocky start with a double bogey and three bogeys over the first six holes on Saturday, but she righted herself with four pars and a birdie and trailed by two shots when she got to the tee of the 204-yard 13th hole. It appeared Porvasnik would be able to make up another stroke when Wright knocked her tee shot left of the green, 23 yards from the hole. But, like many champions, Wright chipped in for birdie.

"That was the best, it boosted her confidence," said Porvasnik, who ended up with a bogey for a two-shot swing. "I was like, 'Wow, how did that go in?'"

Still, Porvasnik was pleased with her second-place finish as a 10th grader.

"I played OK, but not my best," she said. "Emily played really good. She is a good player. But, I'm really happy. Second is good. As a team, we improved over last year and we'll definitely improve next season."

played the way they were told to play... stay a little conservative, don't take any unnecessary risks. They played well."

Junior Matt Gerard backed Titsworth with a 153, senior Anthony Maroon had a 158 and senior Connor McCafferty had a 163 as the Wildcats finished 15 shots ahead of third-place Dublin Jerome.

The bid by Lakota West's Korey Ward to become Ohio's first three-time state champ in 26 years did not materialize. Ward shot 2-over 73 on Saturday, but an opening 75 doomed him to a tie for third place, four shots back.

Highland's team scores of 319-320 were a significant im-

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