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Kenston Girls' Golf Team Looking To Improve over the Summer

By Dan Murray

It will be a tall order for Kenston girls' golf coach Kip Freeman to find a replacement for All-Ohio standout Nicki Henry when the Lady Bombers tee off this August.

Henry set several school records for Kenston during her four-year career and capped it all off with a fifth place showing at last fall's state championships. As a team, the Lady Bombers went 6-0 in the conference and were 8-0 overall in addition to qualifying for the district tournament.

Freeman, the longtime head pro at Punderson, will have some talent returning as Kenston attempts to repeat as CVC champs this fall. The top returner is senior Tess Ferguson, who is team captain.

"Tess will replace Nicki in spirit and is a talented player," said Freeman. Ferguson's top round last year was a 79 at the Eagle Invitational and she carded rounds of 86 at the Padua Invitational and 88 at the Mentor Invitational. She also shot a round of 90 at the district on the tough Legends of Massillon layout.

Junior Kennedy Fay, a transfer from Walsh Jesuit, missed almost all of last season due to a hairline fracture in her foot. Freeman has high hopes for Fay, who has fully recovered and should be a key contributor to the team this season.

Three talented sophomores return after seeing extensive playing time last season. Kelly Poe was an All-CVC Second Team selection and has been a consistent 80's shooter. Taylor Bacon is a long-hitter who drove a par 4 hole last season and Chloe Mikus was an All-CVC Honorable Mention choice along with Bacon.

Junior Hannah Bates is also in the mix for a starting spot for the Lady Bombers, who have until Aug. 1 to work on their games before the first day of practice. Some of the players will compete in junior tournaments this summer and all of the team members will play at Punderson, the team's home course.

"We're going to work on keeping away from the really bad holes the girls sometimes have," said Freeman. "They will shoot decent scores but have two or three holes where they blow up."

Ferguson is a hard-worker but still has fun according to Freeman. "This year, I know her and she knows me," he says. "She's looking forward to the season and I'm looking for her to shoot in the 80s."

With a year of competition under their belts, the trio of sophomores could tell the tale of Kenston's season in 2011. "The experience of going out and playing in a lot of matches should help them," said Freeman. "And they're a pretty laid-back group."

Freeman names Orange as the front-runner for the conference title and Hawken as a contender along with his own Lady Bombers.

"We're not going to give it away," he said of the CVC title. "Whoever wins it will have to earn it."