

Tigers' Addasyn Zeller captures SWC individual golf championship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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WOOD RIVER – It took a little longer than she might had liked, but **Addasyn Zeller** came away with the Southwestern Conference girls individual golf championship.

Zeller had fired a 5-over 77 at Wood River's Belk Park Golf Course, a par-72, 5,003-yard layout, but wound up tied with **O'Fallon's Natalie Meinkoth** and had to go to a playoff to determine who would emerge as the winner. Both parred the par-5, 295-yard first hole and bogied the par-4, 310-yard second hole, but Zeller birdied the par-3, 153-yard third hole to take the crown.

Zeller's 77 helped the Tigers to a team round of 341, good enough for second place behind the Panthers' team 314 in the SWC Girls Golf Championship Tuesday. Collinsville finished third at 358, followed by Belleville East (381), Alton (393), Belleville West (449) and Granite City (495).

“During our 18-hole round, I was trying to play the wind, and it was a beautiful day; the wind was just a tough factor,” Zeller said. “In the playoff round – I've played with Natalie before and she's a great golfer – and it was just like playing any other round.

“It was nice to play in weather like this (sunshine and low 70s with a breeze). The course was in great shape; the wind made it hard to play a little bit, but sometimes it was in your favor.”

Zeller admitted to feeling a bit of pressure going into the third playoff hole. “I was positive Natalie was going to make a par putt, so it added more pressure,” Zeller said. “I was able to make birdie on it.

“I didn't expect (to win out on the day) because O'Fallon has a whole lineup of girls who can play good golf; I just came out here and tried to play my game.”

“We came in the clubhouse after she had shot her 77,” said **Tiger coach Abby Comerford**, “and we were waiting for other scores to come in. We knew there was one other 77; she was out on the practice range to stay warm, expecting the playoff. She was able to finish it in three holes.

“It was a great accomplishment; she's been striking the ball really, really well lately. I'm very proud of her.”

“I think we struggled a little bit; we've been working hard on our short game throughout the season. Overall, I think that's improved up to this point of the season,” said **Redbird coach Carey Cappell**. “I know it took us a little bit to get used to the greens – no excuses, they were quick and we needed to adjust a little bit quicker than we did.

“Considering our last 18-hole tournament, we've improved since then and we're looking to get better every day. We'll get back at it tomorrow.”

“My girls played just average; it takes a lot of commitment and practice and you have to put in the time. We didn't perform as well as I would have liked to,” said **Granite City coach Karen Greenwald**. “We've had injuries and we've been short girls.

“O'Fallon's a very good team; they went to (the IHSA Class 2A) state (tournament) last year and they'll be right there this year.”

In addition to Zeller's 77, the Tigers got a 14-over 86 from Kayla Weinacht, a 15-over 87 from Jessica Benson and 19-over 91 from Mary Arth to round out their scoring for the day (the four lowest scores for each team counted toward their team total).

The Redbirds were led by **Morgan Bemis'** 16-over 88, followed by Annie Maynard's 23-over 95 and 33-over 105s each from Jenna Fleming and Paige Wittman. The Warriors were led by Megan Keel's 20-over 92, followed by a 128 from Emma Sturdivant, a 136 from Brittnee Patillio and a 139 from Niya Wilson.

The Tigers will be hosting the Gary Bair Invitational at Oak Brook Golf Club Thursday afternoon before hosting the IHSA Class 2A Regional Tuesday morning.

