

Edwardsville's Tyrrell signs golf letter with Illinois State

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE – Ben Tyrrell has certainly left his mark on the history of Edwardsville High School boys golf.

Tyrrell, who capped off his senior year with the Tigers by tying for third place in the IHSA Class 3A state tournament with an even-par 144 with Geneva's Tyler Isenhardt, signed a letter of intent to play for Illinois State's men's team next fall in a Monday afternoon ceremony at EHS.

“The biggest factor (on why Tyrrell decided to sign with the Redbirds) was their schedule,” Tyrrell said. “Their practice facilities are great, the school has a really good business school (Tyrrell plans on majoring in some form of business at ISU); I think that was one of the biggest factors in my choice, and definitely the schedule – in the fall, they definitely play around here (with the D.A. Weibring course on campus serving as their home), but in the spring, they travel a lot to different places where it's warm and play really good teams.

“I can get better there and play against the best kids in the country.”

The fact that ISU is just two-and-a-half hours from home also played a factor. “My family can come up and watch me; (the Weibring course) is always a good course and the greens are always super-nice; I've played there and it's a tough challenge – I'll get better there.”

Tyrrell has played golf since from a young age. “Probably my dad (brought Tyrrell to golf in the first place); he had a club in my hand from when I could first walk and that was the biggest reason. I played other sports like wrestling, football and baseball, but I stuck with golf,” Tyrrell said.

Last season, Tyrrell had an average score of 72.2 on 18-hole courses for the Tigers and 36.7 for nine-hole courses with a low of 62 in Mattoon for an 18-hole course and 36 at Wood River's Belk Park for a nine-hole course.

The chance to play for the Redbirds made Tiger coach Adam Tyler very happy. “I'm really happy for him; he's getting the opportunity to up there and play,” Tyler said. “It's going to be a great fit for him; he's always done really well on (the Weibring) course – this summer he shot a 66 to qualify for the Illinois state junior amateur, and every time we go up there and play, it's always some of the tougher conditions in October that we play in, and he's always in the low 70s.

“I think it's going to be a real good fit for him; he seems to like that course and plays well, but Illinois State doesn't play too many home matches there, so playing around the country and seeing different courses is going to be right up his alley and he's going to do really well there.”

Having the chance to play different courses, where the challenges are always unique, will provide a challenge to Tyrrell's skills, Tyler felt. "He's played a lot of big, long courses all over the country," Tyler said. "I look for him to do really well there, but with Illinois State, they play a really good schedule against the best schools in the country – it's exciting and it's a chance for him to go up there and make a name for himself.

"He's going to have his hands full for sure, but I've never known the kid not to like a challenge, accept a challenge and that's what he's going to get up there."

That Tyrrell has had the opportunity to play for Edwardsville – arguably one of the St. Louis area's top high school athletic programs – has meant much to Tyrrell. "I feel it definitely helped me excel here with my coaches and all the people who brought me up since I was younger," Tyrrell said. "Edwardsville's a great place to grow up."