

Piar, Cain, Are Returning As Marquette Catholic Girls Golf Team Prepares For Season

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - A pair of returning juniors in Gracie Piar and Audrey Cain, who head up a very good lineup, will be the key to Marquette Catholic's girls golf team as the Explorers head into the 2020 season.

Explorers' Head coach Deb Walsh is looking forward to getting the season underway.

"It's gone pretty well," Walsh said in a recent interview about preseason work.

A total of 22 golfers came out for the tryouts and the opening of preseason practice, and Piar, who developed into one of the area's top golfers in 2019, will be the team's top player, with Cain being a very close second.

Piar will be the key player to the Explorers' fortunes this season.

"I'm looking forward to continue to make progress," Walsh said of Piar. "She's a great competitor, she loves competition, she's developed her game so much more this summer. I'm look forward to the season."

Both Piar and Cain are a close knit duo, and they both thrive on competition.

"Audrey and Gracie are a close pair, and they push each other," Walsh said. "They both handle pressure so well, and they're both stellar competitors."

Both Piar and Cain head up a very good lineup for Marquette, and that lineup also will have seniors Cat Hollis and Murphy Youngblood, junior Clancy Maag and sophomores Ava Bartosiak and Lily Montague. It's still a young team, but full of potential.

"We're young still, and the sky's the limit," Walsh said. "I think we've got to shoot for those stars."

Scheduling has been made a bit more difficult, due to the Illinois High School Association's rules that were put into effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Walsh in in favor of all the safety protocols put into place by the organization.

"The IHSA has done their best to keep the safety of the players at the forefront," Walsh said. "We are required to wear masks during competition, along with our social distancing, and we feel entirely confident that we can have our season this year."

Walsh also gave a lot of credit and kudos to new athletic director Brian Hoener and athletic secretary Deanna Bridgewater for helping to put together a very good schedule and to keep up with the latest news on the pandemic and IHSA rules and guidelines.

"They've done a fantastic job putting together our schedule, and keep up with the COVID regulations," Walsh said.

The Explorers' girls golf schedule is a good one, which includes all local teams, which was required by the IHSA guidelines to limit travel.

"I think all concerned did their best to put together a schedule that's conducive with the IHSA regulations," Walsh said, "and we can keep these teams in mind with the schedules. We have a good, competitive schedule, even though it's local, and we're one of the lucky schools that have golf teams in our area. All of us like the competition, and it's nice we have that kind of camaraderie in the area."

Walsh is raring to go to get the season underway, and is looking forward to the great competition.

"We're ready to go," Walsh said, "and I think we're going to have a great, competitive season."