



Johnson, Messinger, Piar Continue To Shine In Alton Invitational, Kenney, Daech, Weedman Also Place In Top 10

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GODFREY - Edwardsville's Nicole Johnson, Alton's Natalie Messinger and Marquette Catholic's Gracie Piar continued to shine in Saturday's Alton Invitational at Rolling Hills Golf Course.

O'Fallon's Chloe Davidson and Edwardsville's Nicole Johnson finished tied for first, with Davidson winning on a scorecard tiebreak, while Alton's Natalie Messinger and Marquette Catholic's Gracie Piar both tied for third, with Messinger winning on a tiebreak, and Riley Kenney also placing in the top ten with Triad's Emma Hill and the Tigers' Grace Daech and Sydney Weedman tied for 10th as the Panthers won the Alton Classic girls golf tournament Saturday morning at Rolling Hills Golf Course in Godfrey.

O'Fallon took the team title with a score of 316, six shots ahead of the Tigers and Explorers, who tied for second with scores of 322, but Edwardsville took second on a tiebreak. The Knights were fourth with a score of 344, with Belleville East fifth with a 358, Collinsville, Belleville West and the Redbirds in a three-way tie for sixth with identical 361 scores, with the Kahoks taking sixth, the Maroons seventh and the Redbirds eighth on a similar scorecard tiebreak, the Edwardsville junior varsity coming in ninth with a 372, Columbia 10th with a 386, and Highland placed 11th with a 393.

Alton head coach Carey Cappel was very pleased with the way the Redbirds played on the day, and much of the work the team has been doing on the practice courses and ranges is starting to pay off.

"We played really well today," Cappel said. "We have been working on a few things in practice, and they were able to transfer it to the course today."

Both Messinger and Kenney, the two seniors on the Redbirds, played well, and were able to overcome some flaws in their game to finish well.

"They played really, really well today," Cappel said. "Natalie played really well. I don't think she was very happy with her putting, but everything else came together for her. She's worked really hard in practice, and she's been transferring it into the tournaments and meets. Riley shot her career low today, and her focus was right on and in a great mental state."

The Redbirds have had two of their key golfers out, and Cappel was very proud that her younger players stepped up and played well also.

"We have two girls out right now, our numbers three and four," Cappel said, "and our other girls had to step up, and that's what they did today."

Overall, Cappel was very happy with how things turned out on the day, coming in the three-way tie for sixth, just missing the top five by a few strokes.

"We're very happy," Cappel said. "We were a few shots out of fifth, a three-way tie for sixth, and we finished eighth on a tiebreak."

Johnson and Davidson tied for first with four-over-par 75s on the day, with Davidson taking a scorecard tiebreak to claim the top spot, while Piar and Messinger tied for third with a pair of 76 scores, Messinger placing third on another tiebreak. Audrey Cain of Marquette was fifth with a 77, while Maddie Vanderheyden of the Panthers was sixth with a 78, Kenney and O'Fallon's Reagan Martin tied for seventh with each shooting a 79, and Kenney taking seventh on the tiebreak, Hill finishing ninth for the Knights with an 81, and Daech and Weedman tying for 10th with both shooting an 82, Daech taking 10th on the tiebreak.

Besides Johnson, Daech and Weedman, Riley Burns and Caitlyn Dicks each shot an 83, while Morgan Landry had an 86 for the Tigers. Outside of both Piar and Cain, Ava Bartosiak shot an 83, Clancy Maag carded an 86, and Lily Montague fired a 95. Along with Hill, Triad had an 84 from Anja Mills, Makenna Keith scored an 87, Jessica Sager fired a 92, Makenna Jensen carded a 94, and Ella Moore had a 97.

Both Maya Clark and Ricki Merlak led the Kahoks with a pair of 85s, while Abby Fister shot a 90, Sammi Qualls had a 101, Carstyn Jones shot a 103, and Kiley Belobraydic carded a 104. Outside of both Messinger and Kenney, Olivia Boyd and Lexi Paulin both shot 103, and Samantha Eales carded a 125.

The Redbirds will get back to work this week in preparing for a meet against Highland and Jersey on Tuesday, a Par-3 tournament hosted by Belleville East Thursday, the O'Fallon Invitational on Sept. 22, and a triangular meet against Father McGivney Catholic and Jersey in preparing for the second round of the Southwestern Conference tournament Sept. 29 at Far Oaks Golf Course in Caseyville.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)