

EHS Freshman Mason Lewis Makes History With Regional Crown, Tigers Advance To Class 3A Sectional As Team, Ottwell, Siatos As Individuals

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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GRANITE CITY - Edwardsville golfer Mason Lewis made team history by becoming the first freshman in school history to win an individual championship in an IHSA regional golf tournament by firing a one-under-par 71 to help the Tigers qualify for the Class 3A sectional on Monday at Nettle Creek Country Club in Lockport.

O'Fallon won the team title at the Collinsville Class 3A regional, held at Arlington Greens Golf Club outside of Granite City, with a 304, edging out Quincy, with a team score of 305, while the Tigers came in third with a 312 to advance to Monday's

sectional. Belleville West was fourth with a 325, Alton came in fifth with a 337 and both Belleville East and Collinsville tied for sixth with each shooting a 344. Granite City entered individual golfers, but didn't record a team score.

Lewis won the individual title by two shots over Quincy's Cameron Bergman, who shot a 73, while O'Fallon's Gavin White was third with a 75, teammate Thai Praket tied for fourth with Luke Mettemeyer of the Blue Devils and Mason Baskett of O'Fallon, all shooting a 76, Hunter Ficken of the Panthers tied for seventh with Quincy's Brady Walker, each shooting 77, and Alton's Sam Ottwell qualified for the sectional as an individual by finishing in a three-way tie for ninth with O'Fallon's Luke Jackson and Edwardsville's Drew Suhre, all having a 78.

Lewis started off a bit slow, but gained momentum in the middle holes and finished with a flourish.

"He actually was two-over when he started," said Edwardsville head coach Adam Tyler, "got on a little bit of a roll in the middle, and finished it up well. "

Lewis made history in another way also.

"He may be the first Tiger freshman to win the regional," Tyler said, "and that may be the lowest round a freshman has ever shot in the postseason."

It's all a part of a season where the Tigers emerged as one of the most pleasant surprises of the year, as a very young team has played well and overachieved most of the season.

"We didn't know what to expect as coaches this year," Tyler said, "but they have exceeded our expectations. We were looking at it as a building year, with the kids getting used to varsity golf. But now, I believe that we and the kids expect to win every time we tee it up."

Besides Lewis and Drew Suhre, Bryce Pryor shot an 81, Bennett Babington had an 82 and both Carter Crow and Joe Chiarodo each came up with an 83. Alex Siatos also qualified for the sectional as an individual for the Redbirds with an 81, with Alex Schneider firing an 88, Charlie Coy shot a 90, Chance Linenfelter had a 96 and Cooper Hagen shot a 99.

The Kahoks advanced two of its golfers --- Jack Geisen and Leighton Morris --- with Geisen shooting an 81 and Morris firing an 85. Eli Vering had an 87 for Collinsville, while Christian Voloski fired a 91, Andrew Chi shot a 92 and Tyler Linton came up with a 96.

The Warriors' only golfer, Brady Smallie, shot a 93 on the day.

The Tigers, along with the qualifying individuals, will play Monday in the Lockport Township sectional, and for the Tigers, who have three freshmen and three sophomores in its lineup, it's another chance to shine on courses the younger players haven't been on.

"It's a course we've never played before," Tyler said in reference to Nettle Creek, "like most other courses we've played. When you have three freshmen and three sophomores, they haven't played on most of the courses we normally play, which is also impressive. They're shooting those scores on courses they've never seen before, and these aren't easy courses."

And as far as the expectations for the Tigers in the sectional, Tyler will let the chips fall where they may.

"Just like the rest of the year, we're going to go in with no expectations," Tyler said, "and see how it goes. With them being so young, we don't have to break state records or win state this year. I'm really very proud of everyone."