

FRESHMAN GOLFERS EARN RESPECT AT CLARKSVILLE REGIONAL



Above: Crockett's Jack Shaver and Rachel Crossnoe (photo courtesy of Maryanne Shaver)

By Ron Barry

Sometimes in team sports, when a freshman makes a varsity squad, he or she may understandably feel a bit awkward trying to fit in among the "veterans."

When that team sport also involves individual play - such as golf - it can get even trickier, because it might be possible the freshman is the best player, or the only player, on the roster.

Crockett County had both of those unique situations this season when "rookies" Jack Shaver and Rachel Crossnoe were the number one players in the lineup whenever the Cavalier golfers hit the links for a match. Crossnoe often had the additional awkwardness of being the only female playing - at least the only one representing Crockett.

Awkwardness aside - and that's exactly where both of these freshmen pushed it - the duo accomplished the extremely rare feat of qualifying for the TSSAA regional tournament in their first appearance as varsity players. Shaver won a playoff to earn the second seed from the district tourney, and Crossnoe played well enough to earn a berth as one of the individuals from the girls' side of the field.

Both played Monday morning in Clarksville at Swan Lake Golf Club, and while neither one advanced to the state tournament, both of them turned in admirable performances for freshmen. Shaver, who often has to play against all seniors in his groupings, fired a respectable 78 to accomplish his goal of breaking 80 in his first regional. Crossnoe bettered her district tournament score by a full nine strokes in the girls' event, carding a 105 for the 18 holes.

It capped a season of learning experiences for Coach Chris Eubanks and his teams. The boys graduated the five players who had represented the school in every match for the past two seasons, and the girls squad didn't even have a player for the last two years. So Eubanks entered the 2023 slate without a single golfer with varsity experience.

Still, in high school golf, even if a team struggles to compete, an individual who plays well enough has the opportunity to move on in post-season play if the scores are good enough. And that's what Shaver and Crossnoe did at the district.

At Monday's regional, Shaver beat eight of the other nine golfers who played as individuals, and only seven of the other 33 players from the qualifying teams topped his score. The hometown Clarksville High squad won the team title to advance to the state. The next four individuals in the scoring - Dickson County's Jackson Herrington (65, the medalist for the event), Lexington's Noah Williams (74), Dickson's Bo Kerr (75), and Brier Gentry (75) - also gained state berths.

Final scoring for the boys regional:

Clarksville - Cooper Jones 71, Briley Hagewood 72, Parker Elkins 74, Braeden Parker 77, Ethan Haston 83 (top 4 count for team score of 294). Dickson County - Jackson Herrington 65 (medalist), Bo Kerr 75, Greyson Barrett 78, Maddox Franklin 80, Spencer Baxter 81 (team 298). South Gibson - Rogelio Gerena 78, Andrew Snuffin 78, Dalton Pevahouse 78, Lane Carr 80, John Schlenker 83 (team 314). Lexington - Noah Williams 74, Knox Franklin 80, Bradley Scott 84, Seth Williams 90 (team 328). Henry County - Carter Thompson 83, Cooper Williams 84, Ben Puckett 97, Harrison Steedly 101, Noah Knolton 102 (team 365). Jackson South Side - Hunter Earney 78, Wyatt Guthrey 82, Luke Benson 96, Steven Perry 115 (team 371).

Playing as individuals - Brier Gentry 75, Jack Shaver 78, Maddux Bryant 81, Caden Powell 85, McKinley Hopkins 85, Seth Larue 87, Robert Hunter 87, Zach Thompson 89, Samuel McGinley 102, Cole Smith 105.