



LOCKPORT GIRLS GOLF SR NIGHT



By Randy Whalen

Claire Ancevicus, a senior golf standout at Lockport Township, remembers her freshman season well.

"When I came here my freshman year, there were no seniors on the varsity," Ancevicus said. "There was no one to take us, as freshmen, under their wing and show us how it's done.

Indeed when Ancevicus was one of three freshmen on the varsity girls golf team in the fall of 2017, she missed that leadership aspect. So this fall she was determined to not only help the Porters to another outstanding season, she was going to be a leader in the process.

"As far as talent, she has a great deal of it that will take her very far in the game of golf," Lockport coach Matt Major said of Ancevicus. "As far as a person, she's been a leader, a mentor to our younger girls."

That was just on display this week as Ancevicus and the rest of the Porter seniors celebrated Senior Night. That took place on Monday, Sept. 21 at Broken Arrow Golf Course in Lockport.

There the Porters improved to 10-1-1 in meets this season as they cruised to a 169-230 win over SouthWest Suburban Conference foe, Bolingbrook.

All six of the Lockport seniors were announced beforehand and were given the final regular-season home match treatment of pictures and parents in attendance. The seniors are Ancevicus, Josie Brown, Krista Gikas, Fiona Heeney, Xenia Sinclair, and Katie Tomczuk.

But as Major said, it was freshman Gianna White "who stole the show from the seniors" by shooting a 38 to earn medalist honors for the day. The rest of the Porter carded scores were Ancevicus (40), junior Lizzie Anderson (41), and Tomczuk (50). Junior Bella Bozen, who usually plays on the varsity, was on the JV team that day to make room for all the seniors to golf. Bozen shot a 40, which would have tied her for second on the varsity.

But perhaps the proudest thing for Ancevicus wasn't shooting a 40 in her final regular-season home march. It was seeing White win the medalist honors and continue to improve her play in her initial high school season.

"Oh, for sure, I look at her like a little sister," Ancevicus said of White. "We played in tournaments over the summer and I became a mentor for her. I've helped teach her what it's like to play on a team. I remembered what I felt like as a freshman since there were no seniors. I didn't want that for her."

By the time she as a sophomore, Ancevicus had made herself a leader and top player for the Porters. Two years ago she helped them win the SWSC Blue for the first time in 10 years and

also to capture a Class 2A regional for only the fourth time in school history. Anderson advanced to state as a freshman in 2018, before being injured last season. Ancevicus qualified for the State Finals last season as an individual.

So she and her teammates looked to this season as their year. But the coronavirus pandemic has currently canceled the State Finals in this and other sports. Ancevicus, who is still uncommitted for college, held out hope that the Illinois High School Association would meet on Monday, Sept. 28, and decide to reinstate the tournament.

"It's disappointing because this is our year," Ancevicus said. "If state was going happen this was the year to go."

Tomczuk, who has also been on the varsity for the past four years, agreed.

"Hopefully, if we have state, that would be the highlight," she said. "Senior Night was nice. The (underclassmen) gave us gifts. We knew one day this (Senior Night) would come. One of my highlights was the first time I broke 90 and placed in a tournament."

Gikas and Sinclair are both in their first seasons on the varsity.

"I didn't change anything, I just got better and improved to do way better than last year," Gikas said of moving up to the varsity this season. "What I will probably remember most is my friends. The team has been so supportive."

Sinclair has been very happy to be on the varsity as well.

"I played with friends over the summer and hit balls in the backyard, so I thought I had a good chance of making it," Sinclair said of moving up to the varsity. "I've really enjoyed it and I'm happy I got the experience."

Heeney moved up to the varsity at the end of her freshman season and has stayed there since. Even without the big tournaments on the weekends, which were canceled because of the COVID, she says this season has been outstanding.

"We've really bonded well with each other and had a lot of fun," she said. "We really have a special group and get along well. It's sad that this is our last year here."

Lockport will host the SWSC Blue meet on Tuesday, Sept. 29 at Broken Arrow. The Porters have already had some close meets with Blue Division rivals Lincoln-Way East and Sandburg, who they were scheduled to see again on Saturday, Sept. 26 as part of a quadrangular meet at Silver Lake Country Club in Orland Park. A second SWSC Blue title in three seasons is certainly a goal for Lockport.

At the moment there is only one round of postseason slated to happen. That is an expanded regional. The Porters will be one of 11 teams in the Class 2A Minooka Regional, which will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 7 at Heritage Bluffs Golf Club in Channahon.

Lockport will be among the favorites there in a field that also includes Bradley-Bourbonnais, Joliet (Co-op), Kankakee (Co-op), LaSalle-Peru, Lincoln-Way Central, Lincoln-Way West, the host Indians, Ottawa Township, Plainfield Central, and Plainfield South.

"It's all about the girls and yes, this is a special group," Major said. "We've shot 159 on nine holes this season and I don't know if that's ever happened for us before. Our only blemishes are a tie and a loss to Sandburg. We're excited to host the conference and should be able to do well in the regional."