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Bearcat Golfers Rebuilding In 2012

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The DHS Golf team has found great success in recent years. Under coach Eric Sitze, the squad finished third in the state two years ago, and last season, the Bearcats sent four to the state championships.

The team has lost four seniors in the last two years, but two of them (Jon Bowman and Chance Holden) moved to on play golf at the collegiate level.

"We're reloading this year. We finished third in state two years ago, and last year I took four to state," Sitze said. "I've lost four Varsity golfers in the last two years; Jon [Bowman] and Chance [Holden] went on to play in college, and we've lost Brennan Justice and Logan Robey, who were three year varsity players. We have 11 kids on the team this year; we can play five in tournaments and six in matches, and I have three guys back that played Varsity last year."

Cody Stevens is the team's lone senior; the three-sport athlete has already signed to play golf and football at Missouri Valley College. Ryan Joyner, a junior, and Myles Urhahn, a sophomore, both saw significant time on the varsity level last season.

"Cody [Stevens] has played a ton, and he just signed a golf

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scholarship, and we also have Myles Urhahn and Ryan Joyner," Sitze said. "Both played a little bit of Varsity last year; Myles is just a sophomore, and he's shaved a few strokes off his scores from last year. Ryan's scores still aren't very low, but he's got time to improve. I've had a freshman, Brandon Strickler, turn in a decent score or two, so we'll see how he does."

"Cody's shot some really good scores so far this year," Sitze added. "He's got a lot of experience over the last two years, and I expect great things from him this year."

Sitze noted that, on a team level, things would be hard this year due to their youth, but he expects good individual performances from his veterans.

"Team-wise, it will be a struggle this year, but on an individual level, we should have a few guys do pretty well," he said. "I'm letting them get a feel for their game and seeing where they are based on scores right now."

One of the biggest challenges for any golfer, regardless of age, is the short game - shots close to the green. Sitze noted this as one of the biggest challenges for his golfers early in the season.

"The biggest hurdle early is mostly their short game - you can make up a lot of strokes around the green," he said. Any year, if you watch these guys play golf, they lose a lot of strokes on the green in chipping and putting."

Only four of the Bearcats' matches are at their home course - Hidden Trails Country Club - this season, but Sitze said he prefers to have his team on the road and on harder courses.

"We really like to play on the road a lot. When you get to district and state-type courses, they all have bent greens, so they are a lot faster," Sitze noted. "We have Bermuda grass here, so it's a little slower. We also don't have the tiered greens and sand traps that a lot of other courses have."

The Bearcats are set to open the 2012 season on Friday, March 23, in a four team match with New Madrid County Central, Malden, and Bloomfield. The match is set to get underway at 4:00 p.m. from Hidden Trails Country Club.

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