

Golf Swings Into Spring Season

By Laura J. Clanton
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New start, new practice facility, and new energy.

The DePaul Blue Demons Golf team is “better prepared” and stronger than ever, said Coach Betty Kaufmann.

February marked the start of the spring season for the Blue Demons, who came out with a rocky start in The Match Play in Orlando last week.

And still, they managed to pull out a win on the last day over Illinois State 3.5-2.5.

“We were so much better last week than in the winter,” said Kaufmann.

“Our goal is to always be better this week than last week and we did that.”

As the team returns to play after a 2 month hiatus, their focus is on positioning themselves in matches to keep consistent and steady from start to finish.

It’s important that we be “mentally tougher,” said Kaufmann.

The team definitely hopes to come out stronger this spring and “play smart, play steady,” said Kaufmann.

A big part of the strategy relies on the four players who are setting the bar for this team in performance, attitude and leadership.

Senior Ben Westley and Junior Russell Budd, have been “pretty solid,” said Kaufmann.

“Ben has traveled to all tournaments for four years and Russell has been pretty regular.”

Underclassman Jan Juelicher and Moritz Ackerhans, both international players from Germany, have also been welcomed additions to the team.

Ackerhans, who joined the team a year ago, played in 5 events totaling 15 rounds last season, while Juelicher is beginning his first season with the Blue Demons this year. Both traveled with the team to Orlando and will join the team in South Carolina on the 18th.

Both Ackerhans and Juelicher have put up “good numbers this season” and can be expected to travel often this season said Kaufmann.

Another up and comer on the team this season is Junior John Pavelko, who was one of only four,

including Ackerhans, Westley, and Budd to score individual wins day 1 in Orlando.

Pavelko will travel to South Carolina and has shown “great progress,” said Kaufman.

“I’m expecting him to step up” this season Kaufmann adds.

However, Big East collegiate golf is “individual game but a team sport,” said Kaufmann.

“We are only as good as each individual player.”

Because the match score is a combined overall average of the individual games, every game counts and every player is held accountable to their teammates.

One element that is sure to affect that team performance is the addition of a new facility where the team is able to practice and focus on teaching and improvement.

Although the team travels a lot, the addition of this facility allows the team to devote more time to practice and working on basic skills to improve their individual games.

“What we can do now and teaching capacity has made them so much stronger,” said Kaufmann.

“It takes time to see progress,” she adds, however, the team has already shown “tremendous improvement.”

Only time will tell what we can expect from the maturing team over the course of the season, however their goals are still the same: to finish the season with all top 5 finishes and to go to the Big East Championships.

The Blue Demons face Ohio in South Carolina on Saturday and Wexford Plantation Intercollegiate on Monday.