

Welch snags spot in state golf tourney



Louisburg junior Hogan Welch shoots onto the green on hole No. 18 on Monday during the Class 4A regional tournament at Osawatomie Golf Course. Welch carded an 85 and earned a spot in the state tournament.

OSAWATOMIE – As the final group of golfers came in, all Hogan Welch could do was wait and think about all his missed chances.

Whether it was the hole where he lost his ball, or the several missed putts down the stretch, Welch was hoping those mistakes wouldn't hurt his chances at a state tournament appearance.

They didn't.

The Louisburg junior earned a spot in the Class 4A state tournament Monday as he finished with an 85 at the regional tournament at the Osawatomie Golf Course. The top two teams and the top five other individuals qualify for state.

“I felt like I didn't play as good as I could have, but I held it together and I didn't lose my cool like maybe I could have,” Welch said. “I think keeping my composure was probably key in being able to qualify for state. I am definitely happy to make it.”

Welch's 85 turned out to be the cut line for those individual qualifiers. Ottawa won the regional with a 324 and Iola was second with a 328.

"I told Hogan he would have to shoot an 82 to go to State and he missed two short putts on the last two holes and probably thought that he would miss it again like last year by one stroke," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "Thank goodness he didn't. He didn't play his best golf, but it was enough."

Fort Scott's Conner Antonetti had the best score on the day with a 78 on the par 71 course and was the first individual to qualify. Paola's Tanner Thomas shot an 84 to earn the second spot and three golfers, including Welch, shot an 85 to grab the last three spots.

"I knew I was in contention there, but I wasn't sure if I was going to make it," Welch said. "I had my chances to secure it a little more, but I just had to wait and see. It was a relief."

Welch didn't have the best start to his day as he lost his tee shot on the third hole, and after not being able to find it after five minutes, he had to tee off again and carded an eight.

He seemed to bounce back just fine as he followed it up with two birdies, including one on the next hole.

"Those birdies were huge for me confidence-wise and being able to stay in it," Welch said.

Welch's trip to state became a little more in doubt as he missed short putts on his final two holes that made it a little more nerve-racking.

"My putting is just horrible right now," Welch said. "They were short putts, but they were a little more difficult than what it looked, but I still should have made them. I

definitely need to keep working on that.”

As for the rest of the Louisburg team, the Wildcats struggled at times but still finished fourth in the team standings with a 362. Sophomore Ty Martin and junior T.J. Svoboda tied for second on the team with a 92.

Senior Brady Lambeth bounced back with a strong back nine to finish with a 93 to end his Wildcat career. Fellow seniors T.J. Smith and Logan Glenn shot a 95 and 99, respectively, to round out the Louisburg scores.

Welch will continue his season Tuesday when he travels to McPherson and Turkey Creek Golf Course for the Class 4A state tournament. Golfers will tee off at 8:30 a.m.

“I look for him to shoot in the high 70’s at state if conditions are right and if he can put it all together,” Burns said. “He has been playing great golf.”