

Welch shoots a 79 at state golf



Louisburg junior Hogan Welch eyes a putt during the regional tournament on May 18 in Osawatomie. Welch shot a 79 during the Class 4A state tournament at Turkey Creek Golf Course on Wednesday in McPherson and finished 40th overall.

MCPHERSON – Hogan Welch took to the Turkey Creek Golf Course for the first time last week to tune up for his first state golf tournament.

Mother Nature had other plans and interrupted Welch's practice round and delayed the Class 4A state golf tournament a day. Welch was unable to finish the course and left him guessing on how part of it played.

It all seemed to work out for Welch on Wednesday as he finished with a 79 to finish 40th overall out of the 102 golfers to compete on the McPherson course.

"The state golf experience was awesome," Welch said. "It's so cool to represent your school in state competition and to compete with kids from all of Kansas rather than just the schools in our league. Obviously you're always going to leave a few strokes out there and shots that you wish you could have back but to shoot in the 70s at state, I'm beyond happy with

that.”

Welch hit the links for a practice round last Monday in hopes to get a feel for the course. He played the first 11, but was unable to finish the last seven holes thanks to heavy rains.

The tournament was then delayed due to some flooding on the course, but it wasn’t all bad for Welch.

“It didn’t bother me too much and gave me another day to prepare my short game which was definitely helpful,” he said.

Turkey Creek was one of tougher courses Welch played on this season, and one hole in particular gave him a little trouble. However, like at regionals, Welch was able to bounce back and responded with two birdies on the back nine.

“Turkey Creek was an awesome course and it was really fun to play,” Welch said. “It was certainly challenging and I definitely had to work to save par a few times. Most of the problems it caused me came on Hole 5, the No. 1 handicap hole, which is a long par-4 with a creek that forces you to lay up to about 200.

“I hit a terrible tee shot, then my second went in the water, my fourth shot ended up under a tree and I punched my fifth over the green and ultimately carded an 8. It was ugly to say the least.”

Welch shot a 38 on the front nine and 41 on the back with the help of those two birdies to finish the tournament on a positive note.

The Louisburg junior hopes to parlay this opportunity into an even better result for his final season the Wildcat golf team.

“This should be a great experience to lean on next year,” Welch said. “It’s always good to perform well in a pressure situation and it helps build confidence as well. I enjoyed competing at state and it has given me something to work

toward next year.”

Buhler ran away with the state tournament title as it shot a 293 to win by 17 strokes. Rose Hill was second with a 310. Frontier League teams De Soto and Ottawa shot a 326 and 339, respectively, to take seventh and 11th overall.

Buhler’s Mac McNish shot a 67 to win the individual state title and Piper’s Eric Pahls was second with a 70.