

Wildcats qualify three for state golf



Louisburg senior Hogan Welch watches his shot from the fairway during the Class 4A regional golf tournament Monday at Dub's Dread Golf Course in Kansas City. Welch, along with teammates Ty Martin and T.J. Svoboda, qualified for the state golf tournament.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – It was rainy. It was cold. Throw in the fact it was a Monday and it made for a difficult regional golf tournament.

When all was said and done, Hogan Welch, Ty Martin and T.J. Svoboda looked past the fact that their clothes were soaked. They forgot they were cold after playing a grueling 18 holes of golf.

Yep, it was easy to forget about all that stuff because they were going to state.

All three Louisburg High School golfers earned spots in next week's state tournament following their round Monday at the Class 4A regional tournament at Dub's Dread in Kansas City, Kan. The Wildcats weren't able to finish in the top two to qualify as a team, but the three Wildcats finished in the top five individuals who didn't make it as a team.

Piper won the regional title with a 343 and De Soto was second

with a 359, and both qualified for state as a team. Louisburg finished third in the team standings with a 363.

“I knew I could have three going to state, if they could eliminate having more than two bad holes,” Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. “They achieved that and for the weather conditions I was very pleased. I let them know last Friday after practice that this is been our best chance for five years to go to state as a team and they missed it by just four strokes, but it was a great effort.”

The three Louisburg golfers also earned tournament medals by finishing in the top 10. Welch finished fifth overall with an 86 and the Wildcat senior has now qualified for state in back-to-back years.

“It feels pretty awesome,” Welch said. “I was happy to make it on such a cruddy day. It was hard to shoot the scores that we did, so it is really exciting to get to go again and have that experience because it was really cool the first time.”



Louisburg junior Ty Martin tees off on hole No. 11 at Dub's Dread on Monday during the Class 4A regional tournament.

Martin, a junior, finished right behind Welch in sixth-place with an 87 and earned his first trip to the state tournament.

"I am excited," Martin said. "I have always wanted to go. I

was pretty confident coming in that I would go, which if you want to go to state, you need to be confident. It was an alright day. I had a couple bad holes in the middle that hurt, but it is exciting to go.”

As for Svoboda, he had to do a little extra work for his medal. The Louisburg senior carded a 92 to finish in a tie for ninth place with Piper’s Logan Wilson.

The two golfers were forced to go back out in the rain and compete in a playoff for the ninth-place medal. It took five holes, but Svoboda outlasted Wilson by sinking two long putts on back-to-back holes to keep the playoff alive before he beat Wilson on No. 5.



Senior T.J. Svoboda watches as tries to shoot the ball onto

the green in the rain during one of his playoff holes Monday.

"It is a real humbling experience, especially as long as I have spent playing this game," Svoboda said. "I am looking forward to it. Hogan has told me a lot about it and it is nice that Ty is going to be joining us. It is unfortunate that we couldn't go as a team because I thought we had a decent chance at it, but at the same time I will appreciate this till the day I die.

"At the beginning, my irons were on fire and that was what was really helping me. My putting wasn't doing all the great until I got to the playoff and that is what saved me there. The round itself was frustrating and tiring and it was a mental game, really. In this game, you can't let your emotions take control. It is an amazing experience to sink that last putt, knowing that you beat someone out."

The weather made a difficult Dub's Dread course even more challenging. Scores were higher than normal and the course played differently in spots.

It was something the Wildcats had to overcome and, for the most part, were able to do so.

"It probably made it three or four strokes harder because even if it is not wet it is still fast," Welch said. "I think the rain probably took some of the speed out of the course, which made it easier in some parts, but harder on the others."

As for the rest of the Louisburg team, senior Anders Vance finished fourth on the Wildcat squad with a 98 and junior Nick Welch shot a 100. Fellow junior Jake Hill carded a 111 to round out the Louisburg scores.

Welch, Martin and Svoboda will make the seven-hour trip to Ulysses for the Class 4A state tournament Monday morning. The top 20 participants will earn medals.