

Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312



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North's Millman begins golf odyssey

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Scott Millman has played sports since he was very young, but golf was a relative latecomer to his athletic repertoire.

Now it's No. 1 with the North Farmington High School senior, who has progressed rapidly in just three years of playing the sport.

Millman undertakes his biggest challenge this weekend when he competes in the prestigious World Series of Junior Golf.

He leaves today for Phoenix, Ariz., and the first of seven stops on the tour, which continues into March and takes the 17-year-old to other year-round golf sites in South Carolina, Florida, Texas and California.

Millman, one of 150 amateur golfers who qualified for the WSJG last summer, had labored as a goalie on various youth hockey teams since he was 4 before finding his niche on the golf course.

"I ENJOYED GETTING better and seeing the improvement I was making," said Millman, who got quick results from six hours per day on the golf course. "Like anything, if you see yourself improving, you enjoy it."

Millman, who gave up hockey when his knees went, spent two of the last three summers playing for the North varsity, averaging 42½ strokes per-nine-hole round as a junior and 39.6 in his senior year. But it was between seasons that he came into his own by meeting the WSJG Tour standards.

During two days of state qualifying, he shot 81-81 at Michigan State, placing him in the regional field. In early August, he came through with rounds of 83 and 75 on the University of Michigan course.

"The temperature was 96 degrees and the heat index was 113. It was not fun," said Millman, who teed off at 8 a.m. and didn't finish until 6 p.m. "When I got home I couldn't get up the steps to the house because of my knees and the humidity. It ruined all the excitement."

Millman made the cut and qualified for the national tournament, but he had to pass one more test. The rules require contestants to play in another tournament.

He satisfied that requirement in the Junior Optimist tournament, placing third in the state final. He shot 74 and was atop the leader board for 2½ hours.

MILLMAN, BUOYED by his recent success, was at the top of his game heading into the high school season. He shot a 69 in practice at Glen Oaks Golf Course, helped the Raiders win their first eight matches and was third in the Oakland County tournament.

But his game tailed off near the end of the season as his scores began to rise. It was a nagging situation since Millman, always the competitor and striving for perfection, knew the tour was coming up.

After hitting the links every day — whether it was 2-3 hours or 10 hours — throughout the summer and fall, he knew the cause of the problem.

"I peaked early," Millman said. "It's not an excuse, but it happens. After all that I did in the summer, with 2-3 weeks left in the season, I burned out."

"You try to get yourself hyped up, and it doesn't work," he added.



Scott Millman, a senior at North Farmington, earned a spot on the World Series of Junior Golf tour, which begins this weekend in Arizona.

"When you get it going, it's a great feeling; when it breaks down, you want to bury your head."

Millman, who has witnessed the maturing effect golf has had on him personally, might have let the frustration overcome him a few years earlier, trying to will himself into doing better and trying to overpower a perceived weakness.

INSTEAD, HE stepped back from it all. He decided the best thing was to take a break from golf for several weeks, spend more time with his girlfriend, concentrate on writing a term paper, before picking up the clubs again prior to going on tour.

"There are other things in life besides golf," he said. "It's a major concentration, but everybody will hit burnout eventually."

"You can't go on practicing every day and not get tired of what you're doing."

Millman takes as much pride in the self-discipline he has learned from golf as he does in the success he has enjoyed playing it.

He admits to being an irascible, dislikable individual until coming to the realization his emotional ways didn't mix well with the etiquette of his adopted sport.

"I hated authority," he said. "But within the last year and a half, because of golf I've matured into a more responsible person."

"WHEN MY GAME started to develop, I said, 'I gotta change my attitude.' I had the worst temper — throwing clubs, breaking clubs. I still am (rebellious), but now I'm more straightforward and calm instead of flying off the handle."

"I enjoy the positive attention," he added. "I got all the attention, but it was always negative."

Millman also had to refine the competitor within him. "I always had to be No. 1," he said, "whether it was being first in line to get milk or finish homework."

He also found restraining his temper helped him understand and appreciate the gentlemanly side of golf — that need to be cool and level-headed in preparing for a match or approaching a particular shot.

A case in point was the regional tournament last month. Millman shot 76 at Pontiac Country Club in the county meet, but his score rose to 84 a week later on the same course.

"I was so hyped up I wanted to go out and kill the course," he said. "I quintuple-bogeyed on the last two holes. It was a complete breakdown."

"GOLF IS DIFFERENT; you can't be hyped up. You have to concentrate on hitting shots consistently. It's not the same as getting ready to play a hockey game."

"If you're coming off an eagle or a double-bogey, you can't get so high that you can't recover, and you can't get so low that you can't recover."

"You can't be on an emotional rollercoaster," he added. "That's what I've learned in the last year."

Millman can be forgiven for being a little nervous as the first tour date approached.

He knows it will difficult to compete against golfers who have played since they were barely old enough to swing a club and can shoot 68. But

Please turn to Page 4

Top-rated Hawks won't be underdog in playoffs



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Mill Coleman, who has passed for 1,400-plus yards and 20 touchdowns this year, leads the Hawks into post-season play Saturday.

football standings

FARMINGTON HARRISON				CLAWSON			
25	Southfield	12	0	Bishop Foley	13		
41	Farmington	0	14	Royal Oak Shrine	7		
35	Northville	14	20	Warren Lincoln	14		
38	Livonia Franklin	0	27	Madison Hts. Madison	0		
38	Walled Lake Western	0	33	Warren Fitzgerald	14		
62	Plymouth Canton	14	14	Warren Mott	13		
45	Livonia Churchill	0	42	Center Line	0		
45	Westland John Glenn	7	7	Warren	6		
55	West Bloomfield	0	0	Madison Hts. Lamphore	35		
384	9-0-0	47	157	7-2-0	102		

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Talk about role reversal.

Farmington Harrison's football team is cast as little David one week, and the next it becomes Goliath.

The Hawks, though there were more doubters than believers, billed themselves as giant-killers during the regular season. Harrison got plenty of mileage from the fact it is the smallest school in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

But the shoe is on the other foot now that the Class B playoffs are set to start Saturday. The Hawks, 9-0, entertain Clawson, 7-2, at 1:30 p.m. at Harrison in a first-round regional game.

Harrison only enhanced its reputation as a legitimate power when it destroyed Westland John Glenn, a Class A playoff qualifier, 45-7 in the WLAA championship game two weeks ago. The Hawks, with their tradition and No. 1 rating, are seen as the big guys in post-season play.

"I DON'T THINK it worked then either," said Harrison coach John Herrington of his team's heretofore claim to underdog status. "People do know we have the players here. We don't have great size, but we do have good skill players."

While quarterback Mill Coleman and receivers Chad Burgess and Bryan Wauldron have gotten much of the accolades, Harrison has a good many others such as Jeff Skinner, Dale Katz, Scott Nichols and Rob MacDonald to name a few who have made big contributions.

"The West Bloomfield coach said we have 3-4 real good players, but the rest are good high school football players that play well together," Herrington said. "And that's what we like to look at. We have some 170- to 180-pound kids who can really play."

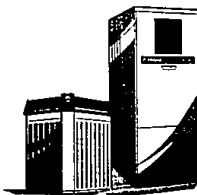
Clawson, champion of the Macomb-Oakland League, has the unenviable task of taking on the division's top-rated team in its first playoff appearance.

"You probably know what I think of that," Trojans coach Dick Moore said. "We might as well get it over with while we've got everybody healthy."

"Being in the same region, if we win this week, we'd have to play them next week."

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