**Center Grove men’s golf team returns with first win at Greenwood Invitational at the Legends**

**By Grady Gaynor**

When an athletic program at any level attains the highest goal of “champion,” it is a great moment of pride for the organization and its fans. However, when the celebration dies down, questions are asked of players and coaches: what’s next for the team when you have already achieved your sport’s highest honor? For sixth year Center Grove varsity men's golf coach Matthew Rodman the answer is simple: “back to work.”

For the Trojans, the talent and experience on the roster is paramount. Seniors Luke Beetz, Sam Hord and Drew Rowan are returning to defend their title.

Also returning are Nate Olson, Ted Lasaru, Jack Kristel, Brady Schier, Mike Young, Robbie Falls, Evan Dunkle, Brady Fanter, Carson Poe, Nate Horner and Kyran Legg, who will be competing for spots on the varsity team.

New freshman players are James Beetz, Drew Hardin, Brody Holubar and Noah Parsetich.

After a day's practice Rodman answered questions about what his expectations are from his team this season.

“Our expectations are to be competitive and have a chance to win every tournament that we play. We want to work hard, be good representatives of our school and compete at the highest level,” Rodman said.

When holding the top spot, it is important to Rodman that the Trojans do not fall into the trap of complacency many other returning champions often do. To combat this, the Trojans have been putting in the hours necessary this off-season.

“This off-season we focused on improving every part of our golf game one step at a time,” Rodman said. “We had a fall golf league that also allowed us to play together and work out some kinks. Finally, we had a winter indoor sim league that gave us a chance to have some fun together, too. It's very important to enjoy the time we spend together while we are working hard.

Rodman believes the biggest question about his team and how far they can go this year depends on the “next man up” mentality he has tried to instill in his players.

“The biggest question is: who is going to fill the shoes left by Sam Slaughter and Brandon Heffner? They both provided not only incredible golf at the state finals, but they also provided a lot of leadership, too. We are going to need someone to step up and fill those roles.

“I think the x-factor that always gives us an edge is our team depth. We are competing every day at practice. There is no spot that's just given on the team. Every spot is earned through lots of hard work and drive,” Rodman said.

The Trojans kicked the season off the way they ended their last by winning the Greenwood Invitational at the Legends last Saturday, April 9. Their first match happened Wednesday against Plainfield before their home opener this Saturday, April 16 as they host the Trojan Classic at Hickory Stick Golf Course.