

Graham qualifies for first trip to state golf meet

Written by Deb Egenberger
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McCOOK—Sometimes an uneasy feeling can be written off as nerves.

Gothenburg golf coach Don Graham hoped his “bad” feeling going into the B-4 district golf meet last week was nothing more than anxiety.

Instead, it was more like a premonition.

“After the great week we had the week before, I kind of had a feeling things could go south at the district meet,” Graham said. “With the seniors out of school and a break in routine, I was a little leery.”

Turns out, he was right overall.

The Swedes shot 364 as a team to finish eighth in the district at McCook’s Heritage Hills Golf Course, 22 strokes from qualifying the team for this week’s state meet.

“McCook’s golf course doesn’t really agree with the kind of golfers we have,” Graham said. “It’s a long course, a little too much for some of our guys. As a whole, we just didn’t play well.”

That doesn’t mean no one played well, though.

Senior Jackson Graham shot 40 on the front nine and 39 on the back to finish with 79 in seventh place as a state qualifier.

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“Jackson didn’t do anything spectacular,” the coach said. “He just managed to stay out of trouble.”

Jackson shot no worse than a bogey on any hole.

“I’d have to say McCook offered the hardest test of golf for a district meet,” Graham said. “I always preach to the kids that they have to avoid the big numbers and not try to be a superhero. I think Jackson did a good job of just playing the way he knows how to play.”

It will be Jackson’s first trip to the state golf meet, which for Class B is at Meadowlark Hills Golf Course in Kearney.

“If he can somehow play his best round of golf, he has a reasonable chance at placing,” the coach said.

Unfortunately, Jackson will be the only Swede at state.

Teammate Jeramie VanAcker, who shot an outstanding 37 on the front nine at the district meet, ran into some troubles on holes 11 and 15 on the back nine.

VanAcker finished with an 18-hole total of 84, three strokes out of the medals.

“I know he’d like to have those two holes back,” Graham said, “but I think you could say that about any golfer on any given day.”

VanAcker took an out-of-bounds penalty on No. 11 and had two lost balls on No. 15.

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“He had not only one bad break but two,” Graham said. “I don’t know how no one saw where either of those balls landed but it happened and that’s the way it is.”

Trenton Long finished with 97 while Alix Meisinger and Dillon Linegar were 104 and 106, respectively.

Jackson Graham teed off Tuesday morning in the first round of the Class B state meet. He shot 42 on the front nine. Full results were not available at press time.

He will play a second round Wednesday (today). Look for complete results in next week’s edition.