Sterling golfers look to get over second-place hump with 2016 squad

By Mike Courson Dale Rose has had one of the top golf teams in Central Kansas over the past several seasons, especially the past three seasons. The Black Bears finished second in 3A last year, losing only to a Collegiate team that ran away with the state title by 33 strokes. In 2014, Sterling finished second in 2A, just two strokes from a state title. In 2013, the Bears finished second in 2A by a mere three strokes.

The list goes on. In 2012, Sterling placed fourth in 2A, just a stroke from a trophy and 10 strokes from the win. The 2011 squad finished sixth in 3A, just four strokes

off the third-place trophy. The good news this year is two-fold: Sterling may have its toughest team yet, and powerhouse Collegiate has moved back to Class 4A. The Spartans have won nine of the last 10 3A/4A

titles, missing only in

2012 as a 4A school.

Rose has back his two best finishers from state last year. Senior Nick Schissler battled off and on for the No. 1 spot on the team last year but cemented his title as the No. 1 golfer with a fourth-place finish at state. Schissler placed 33rd at state as a junior.

Schissler shot a 74 at state to miss the bronze by just two strokes. Collegiate's Camron Chugg won by four strokes and has graduated, and another top Collegiate player will make the move to 4A, making Schissler one of the top candidates for an individual title this spring.

Sophomore Zach Schissler was the No. 3 golfer on the team last year. He finished 28th in his first state tournament, just three shots from a top-14 finish.

Zach's story in 2016 will be extra inspiring as he looks to be one of the top golfers in Class 3A in spite of a battle with cancer. "He's a tough player and a tough young man," Rose said. "He's working

Sophomore Logan Gillespie made an immediate splash at state last year with a 37th-place finish. He tied thensenior Caleb Hendricks, Sterling's other top golfer at the time, with 86 strokes. Gillespie moves into the No. 3 spot on the team this year, making for a very formidable top-three.

Rose took only five



The 2016 Sterling golf team is, front row from left: Nick Schissler, Dallas Lackey, Lucas Wiegel, Mac Thrasher, and Logan Gillespie. Back row: Lucas Briar, Brayden Hosman, Peter Settle, James McNutt, and Coach Dale Rose. Not pictured: Zach Schissler Clayton Bettenbrock. (photo by Mike Courson)

golfers to the state meet last year. The fifth finisher was Lucas Weigel. As a sophomore, he will be fighting for the No. 4 or No. 5 spot on the roster.

That leaves to open spots on the varsity squad and Rose expects some good competition to fill those positions. Peter Settle and James McNett are both second-year players battling for spots, as is first-year player

Lucas Briar.

"There are a couple positions that will be up for grabs," Rose said. "We have about four guys who are really capable of filling those positions."

Nick Schissler will likely be the lone senior on the varsity squad but seniors Braden Houseman and Mac Thrasher will see some time on the junior varsity squads.

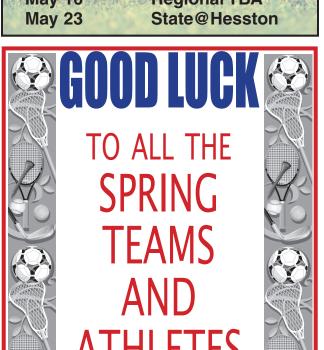
"(Mac) is doing real well," said Rose. "I'm very proud of her because she's starting to hit the ball well. She'll be good on JV."

Last year, the Black Bears won a lot with a Central Kansas League title and a regional title. Rose said expectations should be high but wants to wait until his kids play

> see Sterling golf page 10

Sterling golf 2016







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