GOLDTHWAITE GOLF: Connor Jones, Jaxon Wooten, Rance House, Cole Hermesmeyer, Jordan Simon, Slade Busby, Front Row: Seth Gardner, Jackson Patrick, Connor Bartek, (inset) Kylee Medina, Emma Grebe.

DEFENDING THE TITLE

GHS state championship trio begins journey with new coach

By Mike Lee
Eagle Contributor

Rance House, Jackson Patrick and Cole Hermesmeyer have it figured out.

As returning members of Goldthwaite High School's 2019 Class 2A UIL state championship golf team, they and the two other members of this year's five-man varsity must find a way to take off 10 strokes from their scores last year.

"Give or take a stroke or two, 10 strokes was the difference from our No. 1 golfer to our No. 4 golfer last year," House said. "Drew (Hermesmeyer) was always about 10 strokes ahead of the rest of us last year. It's not one person trying to make up 10 strokes; it's everybody on the team chipping in to make up the 10 strokes together."

Drew Hermesmeyer, who tied for medalist honors at state last year after shooting a final-round 67, averaged 72 for his 11 rounds of high school tournament golf last year. Patrick averaged out as the Eagles' No. 4 golfer at 83 -- actually making the difference 11 strokes to make up. The top four individual scores count toward the team score, although teams may have a fifth member.

The Eagles also lost senior Brennan Medina, the team's No. 3 golfer last year whose average round was 82.

Klark Ashmore, the Eagles' first-year head coach, emphasized that one player can't replace Drew Hermesmeyer.

"Those three core guys (House, Patrick and Cole Hermesmeyer) can average a lower round," Ashmore said. "And our other two varsity golfers -- Slade Busby and Connor Jones -- are capable of shooting lower rounds. They're not playing against other golfers. They're playing against the golf course.

"It's no secret we've got three guys that can shoot 78 to 85. But you could argue that our biggest positions are our Nos. 4 and 5 golfers. Slade and Connor can make a big difference in our team scores."

House, Goldthwaite's No. 2 golfer last year with an average score of 79, shot rounds of 70, 73 and 74 at regional and state -- about a 10-shot improvement over his first five tournaments of 2019.

"Early in the season, I would have always have three or four holes where I wasn't focused," House said of 2019 season. "But from district on, I was focused. I could remember my first tee shot to my last putt."

Patrick, who also competes in baseball and track during a crowded spring calendar, said the Eagles' season is not about defending their title as a football or basketball team might.

"It's not as much about defending a title as it is making sure we work hard and play our best," Patrick said. "We can't control what other teams do. We have to work as hard as we can and play our best golf when it matters the most."

Cole Hermesmeyer, who spent much of 2019 recovering from a football knee injury, improved from 91 to 77 during the final round at state last year and probably made the difference in Goldthwaite pulling away from Vega over the last nine holes.

"I feel a lot different this year, having more tournaments under my belt and more experience at the high school level," Cole said.

Busby, a senior, played on Goldthwaite's 2018 varsity team that finished fifth at state. Jones, also a senior, has qualified for regional as a medalist the last two years. Both have more experience than the typical Nos. 4 and 5 golfers at the 2A level.

"I think the mental aspect of golf is higher than in any other sport," said Ashmore, a former high school golfer at Wellington. "There's the thought process on each hole, knowing where the trouble is and what club to use. You're always trying to position yourself.

"It's also how you react when you hit a bad shot. You can't think about it for too long or it can ruin your entire round. You have to play well on a consistent basis. The team that's mentally stronger usually comes out on top."

Ashmore has four JV golfers this year in sophomore Seth Gardner and freshmen Connor Bartek, Carsyn Campbell and Cutter Campbell.

Senior Kylee Medina, a two-time regional qualifier as a medalist, is golfing for the Goldthwaite girls, along with junior Emma Grebe.

This year's schedule includes new tournaments at Mustang Creek Golf Course in Taylor and Canyon West Golf Course in Weatherford and hosted by Brock. The District 10-2A tournament will be played in two rounds at PAR Country Club at Lake Proctor on March 30 and at Legends Country Club in Stephenville on April 6.

The Region II-2A tournament is back at the Old Brickyard Golf Course in Ferris on April 20-21. The Class 2A boys' UIL state tournament is scheduled for May 11-12 at Roy Kizer Golf Course in Austin. The girls' state tournament is scheduled for one week later, also at Roy Kizer.

2020 GOLDTHWAITE GOLF SCHEDULE
Subject to Change • Boys and Girls Tournaments played together unless noted

Date	Tournament & Location
Feb 24	Comanche, PAR Country Club, Lake Proctor (Girls)
Feb. 25	Comanche, PAR Country Club, Lake Proctor (Boys)
March 2	Glen Rose, Squaw Valley Apache Links
March 9	Baird, Shady Oaks Golf Club
March 16	Taylor, Mustang Creek Golf Course
March 23	Brock, Canyon West Golf Course (Boys)
March 25	Brock, Canyon West Golf Course (Girls)
March 30	Dist. 10-2A, Round 1, PAR Country Club, Lake Proctor
April 6	Dist. 10-2A, Round 2, Stephenville, Legends Country Club
April 20-21	Region II-2A Tourney, Ferris, Old Brickyard Golf Club
May 11-12	UIL Class 2A State Tourney (Boys), Roy Kizer, Austin
May 18-19	UIL Class 2A State Tourney (Girls), Roy Kizer, Austin

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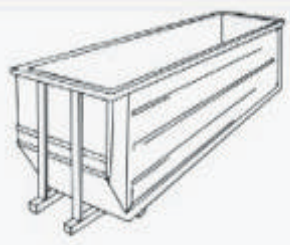

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