

Harvey needs 40 holes to win first two matches

Saturday, June 25, 2005

By Scott Beder

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Matthew Harvey provided the locals with plenty of thrills Friday on the first day of match play at the W.E. Cole Cotton States Invitational.

The one-time Monroe resident who now lives in Georgetown, Texas, won both of his matches in dramatic fashion, needing extra holes in each to advance to today's third round at Bayou DeSiard Country Club.

"Forty holes is pretty rough," said the 17-year-old Harvey, a former student at St. Frederick. "It's kind of draining. I started at 10 this morning and got through at seven."

Harvey needed two extra playoff holes in each of his matches to defeat former St. Frederick and LSU golfer Brandon Aydlett in the morning and Sam Houston State golfer Scooter Jefferson in the evening.

Even though he is the youngest golfer in the championship flight, Harvey didn't wilt against his older opponents.

"I love pressure," Harvey said. "Losing is not in (my mind)."

Harvey broke out to a three-hole advantage after five holes over Jefferson, but his aggressive play allowed Jefferson to get back in the match.

"I slacked off in the end," Harvey said. "I got caught up in myself."

Harvey maintained a one-hole lead after the first nine, but Jefferson took his first lead of the day after the 17th — which was actually hole No. 8.

Harvey, who drew the largest galleries of the day, knocked down a 12-foot par putt to send the match to overtime on No. 9.

On the first playoff hole Harvey had a 12-foot birdie putt to close the match, but couldn't get it to fall. Then on the second playoff hole, Jefferson had a three-putt bogey to send Harvey into today's third-round morning match against Bill Allcorn.

The strong start by Harvey comes a year after he was the talk of the tournament last summer, advancing all the way to the semifinals as a 16-year-old. Last year's success has Harvey hungry for more.

"I've already got a goal set," Harvey said. "If I can beat last year's finish I'll be happy. This is pretty awesome. I love when the people come out and watch."



Matthew Harvey, who once prepped at St. Frederick and now lives in Texas, advanced to today's third round with two extra-hole victories Friday at Bayou DeSiard Country Club. Last year, Harvey reached the Cotton States semifinals at age 16.

Harvey is one of four local golfers to advance to the third round. Louisiana-Monroe's Daniel Keeton and Louisiana Tech's Derek Busby and Preston Smith also moved on.

Keeton, who will be a junior next year, defeated Ian Schneider 4 and 3 in the morning and dusted Kevin Newman 5 and 3 in the afternoon. He will face a stiff challenge this morning, however, when he takes on Jeff Bell, the No. 1 golfer at the University of Texas.

"I had a lot of confidence and I felt good all day," Keeton said. "I'm putting well and hitting it off the tee well. Everything is in a zone."

The strong showing by Keeton, who's from West Monroe, was a good sight for ULM coach Chris Wilson.

"He hits the ball as well as anybody we have or anybody out here," Wilson said. "He showed flashes this year. He was leading the Baylor tournament with nine holes to go."

Wilson said Keeton has the ability. All he needs to do is find consistency in his game.

"He's still trying to put together three or four days in a row. He just has to trust himself and believe he's that good."

Busby advanced with a 4 and 3 win over Jason Lindgren and a 3 and 2 win over talented Australian Heath D'Altera. He faces Southeastern Louisiana golfer Brett Bergeron this morning.

"Ever since the (Western Athletic Conference Tournament) I've been playing pretty well," Busby said. "My putter has been coming around the last few weeks."

Australian Marc Leishman, who won medalist honors after the first two days of stroke play, including Thursday's tournament-record 63, continued to dominate. Leishman rolled over Arkansas State golfer Ryan Knoll 6 and 4 in the morning and dispatched fellow Aussie Ashley Hall in the afternoon.

Leishman has been so tough that he has carded five eagles in four rounds. Against Hall, two of those eagles came after Hall made birdies.

"I had a couple of eagles sneak in there and that was sort of demoralizing (for Hall)," Leishman said. "It's all starting to come together at the moment."