

## Seven weeks removed from surgery, Tech's Matthew Harvey competes in Cotton States

By Keith Prince • Kprince@thenewsstar.com • June 25, 2008

To say Monroe product Matthew Harvey appreciates his time on the golf course these days is a vast understatement.

In fact, heading into today's second qualifying round for the W. E. Cole Cotton States Invitational — after an even-par 72 in Monday's opening round — it wouldn't be overly dramatic to say Harvey considers each round a blessing.

That's what a dramatic six-hour surgery will do to one's perspective.

It has now been just over seven weeks since the talented Louisiana Tech sophomore — this spring he became the school's first golfer to earn first team All-WAC honors — was suddenly rushed into surgery in a San Jose, Calif., hospital to repair the re-occurrence of a collapsed lung problem that initially occurred one year ago.

Harvey, who made all-state at St. Frederick as a freshman and sophomore golfer before his family moved to Austin, Tex., in 2004 following the State Farm Insurance demise in Monroe, suffered a collapsed lung last summer.

It appeared the problem was corrected with surgery in Austin last summer. Harvey, in fact, went on to have a brilliant fall campaign for the Bulldogs when he consistently placed high in tournament competition, including capturing the individual title at the Squire Creek Invitational last October by finishing with a sensational 64 in the final round.

It was the second lowest competitive round in Tech golf history and spurred him to an overall fall average of 71.3.

"I never thought about the lung last fall," said Harvey late last week. "After the summer procedure, and the doctor telling me it likely would not happen again, everything got back to normal. I felt no pain and just went about my life on and off the golf course."

But this past January, while running on Tech's track during an off-season program, Harvey suddenly felt the pain again.

He said, "I just sat down on the track. At first, I didn't want to believe it was the lung problem again, but I knew it was a similar pain to what I felt before.

"I went to the Ruston hospital, and Dr. Greene Butler did a small procedure to insert a tube into



Louisiana Tech golfer Matthew Harvey earned first-team All-WAC honors after his sophomore season. (Terrance Armstard/The News-Star)

the lung. It immediately felt better, but I was shocked as I was leaving because Dr. Butler said it would probably happen again.”

Harvey, 20, added, “I left there with little confidence for the spring. I really was never the same after that day,” fearing that it would happen again.

But he did play this past spring and while never regaining his fall form completely, he still had spurts of excellence and his full-year average was a very respectable 73.13 for 30 rounds.

Thus, when Tech headed for San Jose, Calif., and the WAC tournament championship, coach Jean Hall and Harvey’s teammates were counting on his leadership for the three-day event.

After the first two days, he was in 12th place after rounds of 80-71. But then the pain hit again.

“It actually came while I was sleeping,” he recalled. “It woke me up — it is called spontaneous pneumothorax — and it feels like heart burn. I was able to drift back off to sleep, but the next morning I still didn’t feel right and I pretty much freaked out,” said Harvey.

“I told Coach Hall and we met with doctors and trainers that morning. The pain had subsided and they felt I could try to play. I wanted to, of course, and I played nine holes but by then the pain was back fairly strong so I had to stop,” he remarked.

Harvey was taken directly to O’Connor Medical Center in San Jose where they did an X-ray and said the (left) lung was 40% collapsed.

This is where Harvey feels his luck turned much better — and it did so with the appearance of highly regarded thoracic surgeon Dr. Sharon Bogerty.

“She is considered one of the top surgeons in the Silicon Valley and she realized I needed surgery immediately. My Dad (Bill Harvey) flew out there as quickly as he could and got to the hospital at 1:30 Wednesday afternoon. The surgery began at 1:40,” recalled the young golfer, who remained in the California hospital for seven days after the operation.

Dr. Bogerty feels there is a “99% chance” that the problem will not reoccur and following the May 1 surgery, Harvey is now back on the golf course. He plans to return to California next January to see Dr. Bogerty for a check-up.

“I didn’t play my first 18 holes until about 10 days ago, but I feel stronger every day. And I am gaining more confidence, although I admit that I still think about the lung some and know that I have a ways to go before I am fully confident that the problem is gone forever,” he said.

Harvey, who won the 5A Texas state title at Georgetown in 2006 and has now been an all-star for two straight years at Tech, shot his first competitive round last Thursday when he attempted to qualify for the upcoming U.S. Amateur.

Playing at Deerfield in Jackson, Miss., Harvey shot 75, but missed earning one of the two slots

available. “I felt good about my round. I hit 13 fairways and 14 greens but did not putt well enough,” he said.

Now, however, he has his sights set on the Cotton States. “I love this tournament and Bayou DeSiard. It is my home course and I definitely gain confidence here.”

Long-time friend and mentor Doug Farr of Monroe played a round with Harvey last week and he believes that “Matthew just needs to build up his strength and endurance. I think he is comfortable with the way his lung feels and will keep gaining confidence.

“As for the Cotton States, I will be surprised if he doesn’t play well,” added Farr, who was Matthew’s baseball coach as an 11-12-year-old.

Harvey has already made somewhat of a high water mark in the event, reaching the semi-finals two summers ago just out of high school while beating several highly regarded collegiate players, and then reaching the second round last summer.

“Players who come here really enjoy the Cotton States and many come back again. I know this year’s field is very good and I expect it to be another great tournament. I hope I am there at the end,” he said.

Win or lose, Harvey continues his march back after this week. “The day the Cotton States ends I leave for Pinehurst, N.C. to participate in the North-South Amateur. I applied last year but didn’t get in. This year I did and I am excited about playing there.”

First, however, he tries to take some big steps — and some deep, rich breaths — on his home course at Bayou DeSiard Country Club.

## **Vanderbilt golfers lead Cotton States after first round**

The plot thickens today at Bayou DeSiard Country Club where 144 top amateur golfers battle to finish in the low 64 after two days of qualifying.

Those who make the “A” list will begin match play Thursday in the W.E. Cole Cotton States Amateur Championship.

A pair of Vanderbilt University golfers took charge on the first day. Ben Klaus leads with a 66 after eagling both No. 3 and No. 6 while teammate Hudson Johnson carded 67 on the strength of five straight birdies.

Several golfers with local ties are definitely in the mix, including 1999 champion Bob Cooper at 2-under-70.

Matthew Harvey and Patrick Blunt of Louisiana Tech finished at even-par 72, as did ULM ace David McKendrick.

Cooper, who was 43 when he became the oldest Cotton States winner nine years ago, used his trademark solid putting to spark his solid round.

He had birdie putts of 30-feet, 25-feet and 21-feet during the round using the “claw” grip he went to a couple of years ago.

Harvey said, “My goal in qualifying is to make 36 pars and I’m half way there.”

Harvey made five birdies but came back to even-par with three bogeys and a double on No. 17.

—Keith Prince