

Right moves

Harvey now shining in match play

By Keith Prince

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Call it match play's version of "moving day" as 64 hopefuls dwindled down to 16 at the W.E. (Winnie) Cole Cotton States — and Matthew Harvey made perhaps the boldest move of all at Bayou DeSiard Country Club.

After winning his morning match 5-4 over 55th seed Jeremy Jeansonne, Harvey, the 18-year-old Monroe native who recently won the Texas 5A state title playing for Georgetown High School, faced the University of Texas' senior ace Jeff Bell, an all-Big 12 player who has been ranked among the 100 top players by the NCAA and Golfweek.

When the dust settled, it was the unflappable Harvey who was still standing following a 2 and 1 victory over Bell that included long bombs, deft lobbs, radar irons and solid putting.

Gracious in defeat, Bell said, "He played really well. I hope he goes on to win."

Asked about Harvey's primary strength, he quickly said, "His confidence. He has a swagger and that's good. He isn't intimidated. He didn't even realize who I was."

Although it is obvious Harvey does indeed play with supreme confidence, he definitely knew who Jeff Bell was.

"He is a great player, one of the best I've ever faced," Harvey said. "It is a big win. But I don't ever worry about who I am playing, I just think about my own game."

"Today I hit it great and really stayed focused although I had a bad stretch in the middle."

Harvey was 2-up after seven but lost three straight to go 1-down after 10.

Bell returned the favor, however, with a pair of three putts, and when Harvey calmly rolled in a 4-foot birdie on 14 his lead went to 2-up — and it ended that way three holes later when both parred No. 17.

Today Harvey will try to equal his Cotton States success of the past two years when he reached the semifinals both times.

And, even more good news for local fans, West Monroe's Casey Russell was equally impressive in posting two victories Thursday.



Terrance Armstard/The News-Star
At age 18, Matthew Harvey is just two match-play victories away from reaching the Cotton States semifinals for a third straight year.

Russell, who helped carry Louisiana-Monroe to the Southland Conference golf title three years ago, won his opener 2-up over Troy Denton and then outlasted University of Colorado star Ryan Anderson 1-up in the afternoon.

"I got off to a quick start in my first match with birdies on No. 1, 3 and 4," said Russell, who eventually turned the tide for good with a 20-foot birdie putt from the fringe on No. 16.

He knew his afternoon match would be tough after watching Anderson's morning victory over LSU ace Brian Noonan.

"Anderson was spectacular in the morning and was 7-under when he closed out Noonan on 13," said Russell.

Still, it was Russell who produced the fatal blow in the second-round match against Anderson when he rolled in a slick 8-foot downhill birdie at 16 to go 1-up, the way it ended when both parred No. 17 and No. 18.

Defending champion Andrew Dresser is also still looking strong and could well be on his way to a Saturday conclusion once again — but it is he who must deal with Russell's fast moving freight train this morning.

Defeating Texas-Arlington's Michael Muller 1-up in a morning shootout, Dresser had six birdies while Muller had four birdies and an eagle on No. 3.

"We both played very well and it finally came down to me making a 15-footer on 18 and then him missing a 10-footer," said Dresser.

The Texas Tech star then defeated Bryant Lach 2 and 1 in the afternoon, this time with four birdies and an eagle.

"I love match play and I really enjoy this course," Dresser said. "The greens are starting to get faster and it will be more difficult as we move along."

Two other survivors with local ties are ULM golfers David Hene and Pat Collogan.

Hene nipped Josh Oller in 20 holes in his first match and then stopped Louisiana Tech's Derek Busby 1-up in the afternoon.

Collogan defeated Monroe's Bob Cooper 3 and 2 Thursday morning and then routed Andrew Carroll 5 and 4 in the afternoon.

Collogan now faces Harvey in a big local shootout this morning.

Ruston prep standout Patrick Blunt, who won the 2A state title and then shot 68 to beat the state's top prep players in all classes at Tamaka Trails, finally lost his first match to Brandon Frankhouser, 1-up.

Also, former Sterlington ace Dustin Green was stopped by David Johnson in his first round match, 3 and 2.

In another neat note, Matthew Harvey's Georgetown teammate, senior-to-be Riley Pumphrey, won twice Thursday to stay in the hunt, both times in extra holes.

Originally published June 23, 2006