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SMC Golf Records First-Ever WCC Title

Rebecca Eckland



Joining the team as a walk-on, junior Ben Geyer finished first at the West Coast Conference tournament last week. Photo Kyle Terada

The Gaels had a strong showing the first day of the three-day tournament with freshman Jonathan De Los Reyes, who placed ninth, leading the way to a 14-under par, 274 performance. De Los Reyes was named honorable mention All-WCC.

The second day the Gaels finished just one under par. On the third day, they hit their stride to outpace second place San Francisco by nine strokes (853, -11). BYU finished third (866).

"We didn't have it handed to us. USF played really well the last two rounds. That shows how strong we are as a team," said Geyer. "All year long, we knew we had a good chance to win. But you still have to go out and get it done."

Head coach Scott Hardy once an SMC golfer himself, walked on the team in 1994. He has watched the program grow under his 12-year tenure as coach. "They are great accomplishments-- the team title was one of our goals for the year," said Hardy of capturing both titles. Hardy was named WCC Coach of the Year.

Now, the Gaels are focusing on NCAA Regionals which will take place May 17-19. They will need to finish in the top five teams in order to advance to the National Competition. The last time the Gaels competed at NCAA Regionals was in 2008.

"I know if we play well, we can beat them," said Engell.

Team Standings:

Team Scores Total

1. Saint Mary's (CA) 274 287 283 844
2. San Francisco 289 278 286 853
3. BYU 290 286 290 866

Individual Scores:

Place Player Scores Total Par

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--------------|----|
| 1 | Ben Geyer | 67 72 66 207 | -9 |
| t-6 | Anders Engell | 71 70 71 212 | -4 |
| 9 | Jonathon De Los Reyes | 65 73 76 217 | -2 |
| t-12 | Eric Grimberg | 69 78 70 217 | +1 |
| t-28 | Mac McClung (First Team) | 77 72 76 225 | +9 |

At the 18th hole of the West Coast Conference Golf Championships, Saint Mary's junior Ben Geyer, a walk-on, found himself fighting for a top finish.

He had two choices to end his three-day campaign: he could angle his putt for a par finish that would place him in second or third place; or, he could go for a long shot-an extremely difficult putt-to make a birdie that would give him the conference title and that would contribute to the first-ever WCC title for the team.

"I knew the situation, other golfers with 8-under were already in the clubhouse, and I was 8-under on the last hole. The safe shot would be to finish with a par. I asked Coach Hardy what he wanted me to do. He said he wanted me to hit it and make the shot," Geyer said.

"I was pretty nervous on the putt, [that I] wasn't going to leave myself more than a foot...but when it went in, I went crazy," Geyer said. In addition to earning the title, Geyer was recently named First-Team All-WCC.

Teammate, senior Andres Engell, who finished sixth overall and was also named to First Team, was still in shock by Geyer's putt two days later.

"Ben made his last hole to win by one. I'm still not over that... made the birdie to win by one point."

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[back](#)

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