

2 BC3 golfers 72 holes away from “life-changing” All-American status

Neshannock, Allegheny-Clarion Valley grads to battle in four-day national championships

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(Butler, PA) Michael Rozzi and Noah Morgan are seeking to become Butler County Community College’s second pair of golf All-Americans in the same season when they battle at the National Junior College Athletic Association’s Division III national championships in June in Chautauqua, N.Y.

By finishing in the Top 18 of 100 golfers vying in the 72-hole tournament at Chautauqua Golf Club – and receiving as validation a Lake Course flag from the hole corresponding to their finish – Rozzi and Morgan would match the accomplishments of BC3’s Stefan Carlsson and Thomas Dimon in 2015.

Carlsson and Dimon became the first golfers in BC3 history to be selected as All-Americans in the same season when they finished 15th and 16th, respectively, in the 2015 NJCAA Division III national championships.

“I think it is very reasonable that they would be in the Top 25,” BC3 golf coach Bill Miller said of Rozzi and Morgan, “and could very well be in the Top 18.”

Added Morgan: “I feel like we both have a really good chance at being All-Americans. Maybe not in the Top 10, but in the Top 18, for sure.”

“We have a very good chance,” Rozzi said. “Our minds are in the right spot, as well as our golf games. So we have the utmost confidence in ourselves that we can play.”

Sudden-death victory ticket to national championships

Rozzi, a 2016 graduate of Neshannock High School, qualified for the NJCAA Division III national championships by placing fourth in the NJCAA Division III Region XX tournament at The Links at Spring Church in Apollo on May 14-15.



Michael Rozzi, left, and Noah Morgan, members of the Butler County Community College golf team, could become All-Americans with a Top 18 finish in the National Junior College Athletic Association’s Division III national championships in June in Chautauqua, N.Y. Rozzi is a BC3 sophomore and 2016 graduate of Neshannock High School. Morgan is a BC3 freshman and 2016 graduate of Allegheny-Clarion Valley High School.

“He is really playing well right now,” Miller said of Rozzi, a sophomore who shot an 11-over 155 in Apollo. “He has been consistently in the high 70s. He is really focused in.”

Morgan, a 2016 graduate of Allegheny-Clarion Valley High in Foxburg and BC3 freshman, shot a 20-over 164 in Apollo – tying him with Holden Hitchcock, of the Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce, after two rounds. Morgan qualified for the national championships by winning a sudden-death playoff against Hitchcock on the par-4 Hole No. 1, where Morgan shot a 4 and Hitchcock, a 5, to finish in seventh place.

“He just unbelievably took that playoff,” Miller said.

Morgan “was under so much pressure on the first tee,” Rozzi said. “And he just kind of blocked it out. He came through. He can play under an enormous amount of pressure.”

The sudden-death playoff was intense, Morgan said, “knowing that I was that close and had to go a step further. There was a lot of tension, unlike anything I have ever felt before.”

The experience of his dramatic victory to qualify for the national championships could aid his performance at Chautauqua, Morgan said.

“It prepared me because there is a lot of pressure in nationals,” he said. “I’m glad I had to go through that because I can apply it to nationals.”

“Making history at BC3 would be an awesome feeling”

The four-day NJCAA Division III national championships will be held on the 6,535-yard, par-72 Lake Course from June 3-8.

Rozzi said he is going to write a “lot of notes” after the second practice round June 4.

“And I am going to go over them with Noah,” Rozzi said. “We are going to pick out the right spots to put the ball, and the spots to not put the ball. We are going to mark out all the bunkers and all the hazards. And then just hit shots around the holes that we think will be a good play for us.”

Dante Migliore, of Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, N.Y., won NJCAA Division III championships in 2016 and 2017 by posting scores of 289 and 282, respectively.

Miller said he believes the range of scores among the 18 golfers selected as All-Americans after the four-day tournament could be 305 to 318.

Carlsson was also named an All-American by finishing 10th in 2014, following Michael Cuscino, who placed 13th in 2008 and Matthew Heighes, who in 1996 ended sixth – the highest finish for BC3 since the NJCAA Division III national championships in golf began in 1990.

“Making history at BC3 would be an awesome feeling,” Morgan said. “Especially doing it with Michael as well.”

Becoming All-Americans would be “life-changers” for him and for Morgan, Rozzi said.

“Being selected,” he said, “would mean everything.”

Rozzi, Morgan look to join 25 BC3 All-Americans

Rozzi was selected as a member of the Western Pennsylvania Community College all-conference team for a second time Oct. 8, and Morgan for a first time, after they helped to lead BC3 to a fifth consecutive WPCC championship and ninth overall at The Links at Spring Church.

Rozzi and Morgan could also bring to five the number of NJCAA Division III All-Americans from BC3 in the past 15 months in the sports of golf, volleyball, softball and women’s basketball.

Brittney Bianco, of Freeport; Nikki Houk, of New Castle; and Julia Baxter, of Butler; in 2017 became BC3’s first three females to receive the post-season award in a calendar year.

Bianco is second on BC3’s all-time assist list in volleyball with 1,254; Houk in 2017 led the NJCAA with a .627 batting average, higher than that of any other player on the 350 squads in Divisions I, II and III of the NJCAA; and Baxter is the Pioneers’ all-time leading scorer in women’s basketball with 1,070 points.

BC3 has had 25 All-Americans dating to 1970.