

Young BC3 golf squad seeks 6th WPCC title in row

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Members of the 2018 Butler County Community College golf team are, top row, from left, Ethan Clarke, Julia Fischer and Shawn Gray. Bottom row, from left, Kyle Mudger, Luke Ostermeyer and Gage Terwilliger.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College's golf team returns only two players this season from a 2017 squad that claimed its fifth consecutive Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship. Coach Bill Miller's plan to gauge players' progress involves dividing the Pioneers' 11-match regular season into thirds.

That, he said, will enable him to evaluate his six players entering the WPCC championship Oct. 13-14 at The Links at Spring Church in Apollo, where BC3 will also seek its 10th crown since 1972.

"We need to let everyone go out and play for two or three matches and see what they can do, and where they start," said Miller, whose most recent roster with two returning players was in 2006.

"During the middle third, we can develop a bit more of a plan, where everyone gets into their role and establishes where they are going to be. They will know if they are in the top couple, middle couple or third couple."

As BC3's season approaches Oct. 13-14, Miller said, "We need to prepare for the tournament and get our best players out there to see what they can do."

His best players at the outset of the season may be Luke Ostermeyer, a Laurel High School graduate who was BC3's No. 4 player in 2017; and Julia Fischer, a 2017 Freeport High graduate who last fall became the first female golfer at BC3 in Miller's 14 previous years.

"Luke was a good contributor last year and I'm looking forward to him taking a leadership role," Miller said, "and maybe improve a little bit on his game."

"You just have to keep your head in the game"

Ostermeyer agrees that it will take time for a young Pioneers squad to gain experience.

But, he said, "We could be in contention by the end of the year. All that progress should be made through those 11 matches before the tournament. You just have to keep your head in the game."

Which, in addition to his strength tee-to-green, is another of Ostermeyer's talents, Miller said.

"One thing about Luke is he is never rattled," Miller said. "He is the type of player that when I watch him come in after he plays, I can't tell if he has had a great day or a bad day. He has a good temperament. If he does have a bad hole, he does not let that get to him."



Butler County Community College golf coach Bill Miller, a four-time Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference coach of the year since 2013, is entering his 15th season with the Pioneers.

While Ostermeyer says his strength will be his short game – “That’s what saves me, and allows me to scramble for pars around the green” – Fischer says her tee shots have improved since a 2017 season in which BC3 finished 13-2.

“I can hit them consistently,” said Fischer, who Miller says has added 30 to 50 yards to her drives. “I think I can hit them farther. I have gotten a little bit stronger, so they go farther.”

Miller, a four-time WPCC coach of the year since 2013 who is entering his 15th season, is also expecting strong play from Gage Terwilliger, a 2018 Butler Area Senior High graduate who “brings some experience and a solid background.

“I like his demeanor a lot,” Miller said. “He doesn’t get rattled and he got himself out of a lot of trouble whenever I saw him practice. If he hit a bad ball or was in a bad spot, he could get out of it. You could tell that he was not rattled. If he was behind a tree, he would figure something out. His iron play looked pretty good.”

BC3’s 2018 roster includes freshmen Shawn Gray, of Butler; Kyle Mudger, of Cochranon; and Ethan Clarke, of Knoch.

“We definitely are going to be young,” Miller said. “The past three or four years we have come back from winning a conference to feeling like we are going to keep that up. I don’t know what to expect just yet.”