

Short game from tallest golfer may spark BC3



Members of the 2017-18 Butler County Community College golf team are, top row, from left, Michael Rozzi, Matthew Benson, Bryan Peterson and Luke Ostermeyer. Bottom row, from left, Brendan Aber, Julia Fischer, Cole Krizner and Nathan McCandless. Missing: Kaden Rock and Anthony Lewis.

Behind 4 returning players, Pioneers eye 5th conference title in row

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(Butler, PA) It's the short game and short memory from the tallest player that Bill Miller has coached in his 14 years with the Butler County Community College golf team that may loom largest in BC3's bid to claim its fifth consecutive Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference title and ninth overall.

Michael Rozzi, a 6-foot-6 Neshannock High School graduate, averaged a 79 in 2016-17 in helping an all-freshman squad to an 8-1 finish and BC3's eighth straight winning season. Rozzi earned a spot on the WPCC all-conference team in October and in May fired a two-round 159, placing second and three strokes behind Anne Arundel's Josh Maisel in the National Junior College Athletic Association's Region XX Division III championships in Arnold, Md.



“Our strength right now is having the numbers and having four returning players and their ability to score,” says Bill Miller, above, Butler County Community College’s golf coach.

important. I think there were a couple of matches where I would see him on No. 9 or No. 10 and see what his score was, and then he would come back on the back nine and really have a good score there to save himself.”

“Emotions under control”

Rozzi, a member of Neshannock High teams that finished tied for third and second in the WPIAL Class AA team championships in 2015 and 2016, respectively, credits his ability to recover to keeping his “emotions under control.”

“That’s very important out here,” Rozzi said. “The second you make a bad swing and you keep thinking about it, it is going to be hard to hit a good shot the next time.”

Kaden Rock, among the four golfers to return, agrees.

“(Rozzi) bounces back very well,” Rock said. “If he has a bad front nine he can come back with a good back nine. That’s tough to do. You have to stay composed and make sure you don’t let

Rozzi may be the leader among four golfers returning from a 2016-17 BC3 team that also captured the Pioneers’ second Pennsylvania State Invitational championship since 2014.

“He is very solid around the greens,” Miller said. “Anywhere from 50 yards in to the green, and around the green, he will make a selection of whatever particular wedge meets that shot. He gets himself close for a lot of potential one-putts.”

Rozzi’s approach shots no longer surprise Miller as much as the sophomore’s approach in quickly forgetting about a sub-par hole, or stretch of holes.

“He could have a bad nine, and turn around and shoot a great nine on the back,” Miller said. “That’s very

The schedule

Sept. 1. Noon. At Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce. The Links at Spring Church, Apollo.

Sept. 8. Noon. At Westmoreland County Community College. Valley Green Golf and Country Club, Greensburg.

Sept. 15. Noon. At Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce. The Links at Spring Church, Apollo.

Sept. 19. Noon. Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce and Westmoreland County Community College. Lake Arthur Golf Club, Butler.

Sept. 29. Noon. At Westmoreland County Community College. Valley Green Golf and Country Club, Greensburg.

Oct. 3. Noon. Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce, Westmoreland County Community College, Penn State-New Kensington and Penn State-Fayette. Lake Arthur Golf Club, Butler.

Oct. 7-8. TBA. At Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference tournament. The Links at Spring Church, Apollo.

Oct. 15-16. TBA. At Pennsylvania State Invitational tournament. Penn National Golf Club and Inn, Fayetteville.

things get to your head. You have to calm down and collect yourself. It can be done, but it takes a lot out of you.”

Miller, a three-time WPCC coach of the year since 2013, is also counting on Matthew Benson’s 280-yard tee shots, Bryan Peterson’s consistency and Rock’s competitiveness. Benson and Rock averaged an 84 in 2016, and Peterson, an 88.

“Everyone has to contribute”

Benson and Peterson, Shenango High graduates, and Rock, a Butler High graduate, will draw on 2016 experiences with Rozzi and strategize about WPCC layouts with freshmen Cole Krizner and Anthony Lewis, Butler; Brendan Aber and Julia Fischer, Freeport; Luke Ostermeyer, Laurel; and Nathan McCandless, Shenango.

“They will be talking about the courses,” Miller said, referencing The Links at Spring Church in Apollo, where BC3 opens its 2017 season Sept. 1 and where the Pioneers clinched the 2016 WPCC title with a 3-stroke victory over Westmoreland County Community College on Oct. 2.

Added Benson: “We know the courses we play, and what to expect and how to go out there. Everyone has to contribute.”

Miller said he doesn’t know enough about the freshmen to immediately gauge where BC3 could finish by Oct. 7-8, the dates of the WPCC tournament.

“I believe Luke Ostermeyer is going to be able to help us. I can just tell,” Miller said. “He hits a long, hard ball. Our strength right now is having the numbers and having four returning players and their ability to score.”

Peterson said he believes BC3 is going to have “another run this year, just like last year.”

“We have (Ostermeyer) coming, and he was the No. 2 at Laurel,” Peterson said. “And Matt can crush the ball, and Mike is good too. I think we have chemistry between the four of us (who return) and I think we can get chemistry between the other players too.”

By the numbers

BC3’s Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference tournament finishes since 2008:

First place: 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013.

Second place: 2012, 2010, 2009, 2008.