

Mission still alive for teen

Harvey tops two more rivals to reach final four

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By Scott Beder

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Gary Roberts refers to his godson Matthew Harvey as "The Iceman."

On Saturday, Harvey proved it was more than a cool moniker.

The 17-year-old golfer who now hails from Georgetown, Texas, continued his march at the 54th W.E. Cole Cotton States Invitational, advancing to the semifinals of the match-play event with two more victories.

Harvey, a Monroe native who prepped at St. Frederick before moving last year, knocked off Bill Allcorn 2 and 1 in the morning and then beat Louisiana-Monroe golfer and West Monroe product Daniel Keeton 2 and 1 in the afternoon.

Harvey — vying to become one of the youngest if not the youngest Cotton States champion — will face Texas Tech golfer Andrew Dresser in one of two semifinal matches at 8:45 a.m. South African and Texas-Arlington golfer Tyrone Mordt and Australian Andrew Tampion will face off in the other semifinal at 8:30 a.m.

The championship match will take place in the afternoon.

Harvey, who needed two sudden death playoffs to win his two matches on Friday, found himself down three holes after losing Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 in succession. At that point The Iceman's temperature was on the rise.

"I didn't know if I could calm him down, he was getting hyper," said Harvey's caddie, Robert Rodgers, his long-time buddy and St. Frederick teammate. "He was getting frustrated, but we battled back together."

With his back to the wall, Harvey responded, winning 11, 12 and 13 to draw even and shift the pressure to Keeton.

"I did feel in control (three up)," Keeton said. "The wheels just kind of fell off. I just couldn't hit any fairways. I had a lost ball on 12 and it was all downhill from there, but he played well. He's very good. Hopefully he can bring it home from here."

The match swung on the par-five 16th when Keeton's putter, which had been reliable all day, faltered. A three-putt bogey gave Harvey a one-hole advantage heading to the par-3 17th.



Dan Currier/The News-Star

Daniel Keeton, right, takes a drop at the 17th hole Saturday, handing Matthew Harvey the victory in their match.

However, Keeton pushed his tee shot right and into the water. Harvey made par to win the hole and the match.

"When I got down three after nine, I was trying to hit some shots I don't normally try," Harvey said. "It didn't work. I had to pick up some holes. On the back side I kept it more in play."

Bob Cooper, the 1999 champion and one of the top golfers in the Monroe area for many years, believes Harvey is the next top golfer to hail from this area. Cooper said at this point in his career he compares favorably to local products Brian Bateman, currently on the PGA Tour, and one-time prodigy Scott Myers.

"I've had to chance to play with him and he's got a lot of heart," Cooper said. "He never gives up. He's a fighter. He's really solid from tee to green. It's hard to believe he's (going to be) a senior in high school."

Harvey will have his work cut out for him in the morning semifinal against Dresser, the No. 1 player at Texas Tech. Dresser moved on with two impressive wins, knocking off Australian Marc Leishman, who set a stroke-play qualifying record with a 63 on Thursday, 3 and 2.

"I knew it was going to be a tough match," said Dresser, who finished third at the Southwestern Amateur in Phoenix last week. "Everyone that had played with (Leishman) said he was awesome. I got a couple of birdies early to get going."

Dresser followed with a 1-up win in 19 holes in the afternoon against Southeastern Louisiana golfer Brett Bergeron. Dresser's first lead came when he won the match on the extra hole, No. 10.

Tampion advanced with a 2 and 1 win over Patrick Sullivan and a 4 and 3 win over Jeff Murray.

Against Murray, Tampion was unstoppable, finishing at 7-under in 15 holes.

"I was two or three under myself, but I just flat out got beat," said Murray, a Texas-Arlington golfer. "Any time you can birdie 13, 14 and 15 on this course, you're doing a lot of good things."

Mordt defeated Ryan Zamorano 3 and 2 in the morning and fellow Aussie Andrew Martin, the reigning Australian Amateur champion, 4 and 3 in the afternoon.