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Hoffman feeling better with victory in GMC Golf Championship

MONROE — Harry Hoffman missed last year's Greater Middlesex Conference golf championship after waking up with a sinus infection the morning of the tournament.

He was feeling much better this time around, especially after taking the top prize at Forsgate Country Club Thursday.

The J.P. Stevens High School senior shot a 3-over 75 on Forsgate's Palmer Course to edge Old Bridge senior Pat O'Donnell by one stroke. St. Joseph-Metuchen captured the team title for the third straight year on a pristine day for golf.

"It feels great to win, especially after missing last year," said Hoffman, who tied for fifth as a sophomore. "I started off great with a birdie on the first hole and that got me going. I had another birdie chance on the second. After that, I knew I was hitting the ball well and I just kept firing at each pin."

Hoffman carded four birdies on the day, posting a 38 on the front nine and a 37 after the turn. Before the tournament, J.P. Stevens coach John Canova identified 75 as the goal and that proved prophetic.

"I told him, 'If you can hit that number, you'll be right in it at the end,' and he hit it on the nose," Canova said. "I'm really happy for him. As a senior playing his last high school tournament, he had a real good finish."

Hoffman wore an orange Texas Longhorns cap, signifying his next stop as a student. He will play club golf at the University of Texas in the fall and "see where that takes me."

The title came down to the final hole. O'Donnell also played well and was leading at two over before ending with a double-bogey. Since he was in a different group playing ahead of Hoffman, he didn't know it cost him first place until later.

"I hit a good shot in the fairway and then I screwed up the second shot," O'Donnell explained. "I kind of knew if I was able to par that and shoot 74 I probably would have won. I might have played it a little different if I knew a bogey would have put me in a playoff."

Maertz wins GMC Girls Golf title

MONROE — Mother Seton senior Noelle Maertz added another prize to her stellar resume by winning the girls Greater Middlesex Conference Tournament on Thursday at Concordia. Maertz shot a one-over 36 at Concordia, five strokes better than runner-up Sophia Chen of J.P. Stevens.

South Brunswick captured the girls team title with 184 points, four better than J.P. Stevens.