

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Imperial's Longhorn golfers will get in three tournaments in eight days as they gear up for the C5 district tournament next Tuesday, May 19.

The Longhorns got to the play the district course last Thursday at the North Platte St. Pat's invitational. They finished with their best team score of the season—a 361.

This past Monday, they traveled to Cozad for their invitational, finishing sixth with a 363.

Today (Thursday), they go to Ogallala for their invitational. This will be the final regular season tournament before next week's districts.

Coach Larry Munger said St. Pat's has to be the favorite going in, especially since districts is on their home course, The River's Edge, formerly the North Platte Country Club.

They blistered the course in their invitational, taking four of the top six medals while carding a team total of 288.

Other teams competing for a state berth at the meet include Arnold/Callaway, Bayard, Bridgeport, Gordon-Rushville, Hershey, Kimball, Mitchell, Morrill, Perkins County, Southwest, Sutherland and Valentine.

Munger said his team still has a shot if they can cut 10-15 strokes from their team total and one of the other favorites, Valentine or Kimball, adds five to 10 strokes.

The top three teams qualify for state, along with the top 10 individuals.

To qualify individually, his golfers will likely have to shoot in the 70s.

Munger said Scott Lakey is making a late season push and has been scoring pretty consistently.

Matt Hayes has broken 80 once this season and has the potential to do it again.

In fact, Munger said his whole team is poised for some break-out scoring as the season winds down to districts.

In the last two invites, the Longhorns found themselves out of the medal running but are shooting more consistently, Munger noted.

At St. Pat's, Hayes and Lakey each carded 88s with Casey Francis shooting 92, Travis Wheeler 93, and Steven Fish with 95.

At Cozad, Lakey led the way with an 87 followed by Hayes with an 89. Fish carded a 91, Keithan Cochran a 96, Francis a 99, and Wheeler a 104.

It took an 81 to contend for a top 10 medal at either meet.

Munger said Hayes, Lakey, Francis, Fish and Cochran will compete at Ogallala. If they shoot well, those are the same five he will take to districts with Wheeler as the alternate.

Results from the St. Pat's and Cozad meets are as follows:

North Platte St. Pat's invite

Team standings: 1, NPSP, 288; 2, Cambridge, 322; 3, Mullen, 337; 4, Garden Co., 344; 5, NPHS-JV, 350; 6, Chase Co., 361; 7, Sutherland, 371; 8, Arnold, 373; 9, Hershey, 374; 10, Sandhills, 385; 11, NPSP-JV, 402; 12, Lexington-JV, 426; 13, Wauneta/Pal, 478. Medalist: Shane O'Connor, NPSP, 68.

Chase County results: Matt Hayes, 43-45=88; Scott Lakey, 44-44=88; Steven Fish, 48-47=95; Casey Francis, 45-47=92; Travis Wheeler, 47-46=93; Team total: 361.

Cozad invite

Team standings: 1, NPSP, 324; 2, Cozad, 326; 3, Holdrege, 331; 4, Gothenburg, 339; 5, Kearney JV, 352; 6, Chase Co., 363; 6, Broken Bow, 363; 8, Ogallala, 388; 9, Cozad JV, 429; 10, Gibbon JV, 440. Medalist: Tarron Hecox, Cozad, 71.

Chase County results: Scott Lakey, 42-45=87; Matt Hayes, 48-41=89; Steven Fish, 49-42=91; Keithan Cochran, 44-52=96; Casey Francis, 48-51=99; Travis Wheeler, 53-51=104; Team total: 363.