

Wadlin guides PW to 4th straight SOL American golf title

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By TOM KERRANE, Times Herald Staff

WHITPAIN — Somewhere in the midst of the preseason college football rankings and the NFL power ratings, Plymouth Whitmarsh High head golf coach George Wadlin got his Colonials to believe he found a poll where they were picked to finish just third in the Suburban One American Conference this year.

Where that ranking came from, it may never be known, but this alleged “dissing” of the three-time league champions had its desired effect.

Wednesday afternoon, a determined PW team defeated Wissahickon, 201-206, at Cedarbrook Country Club, the Colonials laying claim to their fourth straight American Conference title and sixth league crown in seven years.

“Coach Wadlin knows how to motivate us,” said PW’s top golfer, Zach Pogust, who shot a 3-over-par 39 to match Evan Beaty for team-low.

“The first few matches, we struggled a little bit. But about midway through the year, our depth starting kicking in and our later players started posting some real good scores. That’s when we knew we could do it.”

It all came down to Wednesday’s league finale for both sides. PW finished up the league season at 11-1, with Wissahickon ending up second at 9-3.

PW had won the earlier meeting, 198-207, at The ACE Club on Sept. 13. With the Trojans also having a loss to Upper Merion and PW having fallen to just Upper Dublin, the Colonials could actually have lost Wednesday’s match by up to eight shots and still earned the league’s one automatic berth into next month’s the District (One) Team Championship.

In that case, the Colonials and Trojans would have been co-champions of the league.

“We were trying to win the league,” said Kenny Yanni, who shot a 4-over 40 Wednesday that included eight fours on his scorecard. “We wanted to win it straight-up so we didn’t have to share it and win on a tiebreaker. We all wanted that.”



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Pogust and Beaty led PW with the 39s while Yanni shot a 40. Nick Jefferies carded a 41 with John Fritz's 42 among the five scores that counted for PW.

"We weren't favored to win the league at all this year," Jefferies said, "but we played pretty well in every match, were able to put it together when we needed to."

Wissahickon's Jalen Griffin led all scorers with a 38, with eight pars on the freshman's card. Jesse Hunsicker shot a 40 and Steve O'Donnell a 41, with Rishab Kumar firing a 43 and Andrew McDevitt a 44.

"I know they were disappointed," Trojans head coach Paul Berry said of his team not being able to beat PW at home, something Wissahickon had done the previous three seasons. "Overall, I'm really proud of them. This has been a really strong year for them, and we're young, so we'll be looking forward to coming back."

The next step for both teams in the Suburban One League Championship, to take place Monday at Indian Valley Country Club. The top 88 players in the league rankings, based on handicap differentials, make Monday's field.

At the start of the week, PW and Wissahickon had four players apiece within in the top-88. Jefferies happened to be ranked 89th with a differential of 6.62. He is hoping his 5-over round from Wednesday will be enough to move him up the one spot necessary to tee it up at Indian Valley next week.

"You just go out there and try to play your game, don't think about that stuff," Jefferies said. "Go shot by shot. Don't think about what it means.

"Other than the bogey on the last hole, I was pretty happy with my round."

And, rest assured, Jefferies was more interested in the team championship Wednesday than his personal ranking.

Wadlin, who spends his winters as an assistant coach on the reigning state-champion PW boys basketball team, knows how to motivate his players.

Now, if only he can produce this supposed poll that had the Colonials' golf team picked to finish third.