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ABAC Golf Team Heads to National Tournament May 22

TIFTON – The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College golf team will compete in the national tournament May 22-27 at Swan Lake Resort in Plymouth, Ind. All seven members of the team will attend the tournament, and the top five will play in the 72-hole competition.
Under the direction of second-year head coach Larry Byrnes, ABAC won the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association Division II championship in April to gain the trip to the national event. ABAC last won the state title in 2012 followed by second place finishes in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The top five golfers who will play for ABAC are Ty Gore, a business and economic development major from Tifton; Davis Verner, an environmental horticulture technology major from Watkinsville; Colton Wyllie, an economics major from Ontario, Canada; Jeb Stewart, an environmental horticulture technology major from Swainsboro; and McKenzie Blanchett, a business and economic development major from Moultrie.

“Only five can participate in the national tournament,” Byrnes said. “I will be taking all seven though because everyone has worked hard, and they deserve the opportunity to experience a national tournament.”

Team members Daniel Nunn, a turfgrass and golf course management major from Swainsboro, and Lane Jowers, an undeclared major from Brunswick, round out the squad.

The tournament will consist of practice rounds on May 22-23 before the competition begins on May 24. The Golden Stallions will play 18 holes a day through May 27. The national tournament is a team event that takes the top four scores of each day from the five players participating for each college.

“Our basic strategy is to go up there, enjoy the moment, and try to play par golf or better,” said Byrnes. “Par golf will win you a lot of tournaments in stroke play. After we play the course twice in practice rounds, we will have a better idea of where to hit the ball on the greens and the course to give us increased opportunities for a better score.”

Byrnes is modest when it comes to his role as coach of this year’s team.
“It was not so much the coaching as it was the time the team put in,” said Byrnes. “They all accepted my way of coaching and creating a team atmosphere. When you have players from different backgrounds, different parts of the world, it is sometimes hard to get everyone on the same page to achieve the common goal. This team worked for the common goal from the beginning, and I can’t put into words how proud I am of them and what they have accomplished – no matter what happens at the national tournament.”

The 2016-17 academic year will bring about a big change for the ABAC golf team. Byrnes has only one returning player from this year’s squad but he has already signed four others to play for ABAC. He will also hold walk-on tryouts when the fall semester begins Aug. 10.

For more information on the golf team or any of ABAC’s athletic programs go to www.abac.edu/athletics.

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