

# Perfect finish: Deerfield senior Elyse Emerzian earns first state berth

**Bob Narang** 10-11-17

Deerfield senior Elyse Emerzian didn't let a hiccup on two early holes during Monday's Class 2A Barrington Sectional trip her up.

After missing the cutoff for state by one shot in each of the last two seasons, Emerzian focused on her training to help her not lose sight of her ultimate goal: advancing to state for the first time.

"I started with a couple of blow-up holes," Emerzian said. "I double (bogeyed) the second one, then triple (bogeyed) the fourth hole. After that, it was good. I just forgot about it, moved onto the next shot."

Emerzian, a four-year varsity member, said she started working with golf (sport) psychologist Dr. Jeff Fishbein, during the summer to help prepare for her senior season. Emerzian showed off her new game Monday, overcoming a rough start to shoot a 77 and advance as an individual to this weekend's 2A state meet at Hickory Point in Forsyth.

"I'm finally going downstate," Emerzian said. "It hasn't been good mentally last two years, but I just kept practicing and playing."

"My mental game helped me. I've done a lot of mental work over the summer to prepare for the state series. My mental game has changed drastically. Dr. Fishbein has helped me a lot. My scores have gotten so much better."

Emerzian said her work with Fishbein and swing coach Trena McDaniel were instrumental to her success. Emerzian showed signs of a breakout season in the summer, winning the Illinois Junior Girls Amateur Championship in Savoy on Aug. 2. She carded a two-day total of 144.

Deerfield coach Tim Bleck said Emerzian's improved play is a byproduct of hard work and perseverance.

"This year she's been better about embracing the fact that to stay focused and positive," he said. "Golf is a long competition ... Monday was a long round of golf, about six hours. To be able to keep that focus

from shot to shot, don't get too high or too low. I think she's been much better with that this year.

"We tried to keep her in the moment and positive, not to focus on all the negative things."

Finishing four strokes behind the sectional medalist, Barrington junior Nicole Ciskowski, Emerzian has the experience and talent to capture the state title, Bleck said.

Bleck said Emerzian also played more relaxed after committing to Bradley at the beginning of the season.

"She's been on the brink of going downstate all four of her years," Bleck said. "I'm happy that she's there. She belongs there. She's one of the elite players in the state. Things just didn't go her way, particularly her sophomore and junior year.

"She really has a chance to win the whole thing. It's one shot at a time. She has won big tournaments. She has already beaten a lot of her competition."

*Bob Narang is a freelance reporter for the News-Sun.*