

# Rookie Golfer Comes Up Big

By Anna Schield

Matt Spier

Matt Spier is a valuable member of the Concordia golf team, not only for his impressive personal accomplishments in competition but also for his contributions to team spirit and positive morale. After playing for Concordia in his first fall season, Spier already placed third in the conference in scoring average. His upcoming seasons look even more promising, with strong potential to be successful at the regional competition and possibly qualify for nationals either individually or along with the team. Those targets are not out of reach. "My coach said if I keep doing what I'm doing I have a good shot for next fall," Spier said.

In order to accomplish those goals he intends to continue improving his mental game. In fact, he emphasized mental stamina as one of the most vital aspects of golf. "If you can keep your mental game down you can play a lot better," he confirmed. Because of the mental nature of the game, Spier said, "I think it's one of the hardest games. One day you can be really on, and the next day you can be completely off."

But the sport's mental challenges are balanced by other attributes of the game. Spier enjoys golf because he says it is "relaxing, not aggressive like other sports; it's more calm and collected. It's just you and the golf course." Spier has played golf since he was two years old and has a true lifelong love for the sport. He appreciates that the game can be played "no matter how old you are."



Spier also values his teammates. He says the team chemistry is his favorite part of playing on Concordia's golf team: "We have great teamwork, and we work well together," he said. Even as a freshman, Matt contributes leadership to his team through the positive attitude he daily models and encourages his teammates to imitate. In return, he says he gains a lot from "watching the older players, learning as I go." In addition, he knows his teammates "help me in staying focused on the golf course and in drills so I don't get drained. They're helping me have a stronger mental game." While the team members mutually support each other in their practice and competitions, their bonding goes beyond the bounds of the sport. Spier affirmed, "We can talk about anything; the team is more of a family."

Spier credits his coaches for their part in helping him improve since high school, especially in the mental aspects of his playing, and in leading him to future success. "They know a lot more; they have a better background, and can help improve your game."

The Concordia men's golf team, with participants like Spier, will certainly continue to achieve success at the local conference level and beyond. "We have a young team, young talent; we can build up the team and be a successful program," Spier believes. Be sure to look for Concordia's name on the regional and national competition rosters next fall.

*Photo Credit: Concordia University*

## Riding Shotgun

"It's a Slam Dunk, Don't Drive Drunk" Campaign

By Denzell Blackmon

The game of basketball is generally played by very tall men and women, and there is no easier way for them to score than to slam the basketball directly through the hoop. A slam dunk is easy, and so is avoiding drunk driving. This is the message that has been sent through an awareness campaign of "It's a slam dunk, don't drive drunk."

The Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference started the "It's a slam dunk, don't drive drunk" campaign to raise awareness on a big issue. In 2011, the Department of Public Safety reported 111 deaths from drunk driving incidents, which average out to about one death every three days. On a late summer night in 2012, Southwest Minnesota State University head basketball coach Brad Bigler's five month old son, Drake, fell victim to a statistic. Coach Bigler and his wife later started the campaign in the NSIC, which quickly drew the attention of the NCAA, raising awareness.

During February, two weeks were selected in which NSIC schools requested students, fans, and faculty to sign a pledge stating that you would not drive intoxicated. If you did pledge you received a blue bracelet with the campaign's theme displayed on it. Senior Student Athlete Advisory Committee, (SAAC) representative Michael Willett felt great about the movement. "I think the campaign went well. The objective of the campaign was to spread the awareness and I think we did a good job of that. We had tables set up right where every fan had to walk by. We also handed out cool bracelets for reminders." The pledges were collected by NSIC SAAC members at each institution. Along

with the pledges, SAAC also contributed with a video which featured students-athletes advocating the effort.

4,800 pledges were collected in total throughout the conference. Southwest Minnesota State University and the University of Mary received \$1,000 dollars each, which were donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, for collecting the most pledges and having the highest percentage of pledges for spectators in attendance. Katie Feuerbach, a senior member of CU's SAAC, felt the campaign was effective: "I think that the night turned out great for us at CU, and it sounds like the overall cause was respected and recognized throughout the NSIC community."

As well as the campaign, some schools offer a "sober cab" service as work study for their students who cannot afford a taxi. "The main excuse I have heard is that a cab ride is too expensive," Feuerbach pointed out. Twenty dollars shouldn't be the difference between a safe night and a bad decision. "When people drink they can't gauge their level of intoxication and can make uneducated decisions." Willett pointed out.

Overall, the campaign was a success. The NSIC achieved the goal of raising awareness throughout the conference. Athletic Director Regan McAthie said, "It was a great campaign. I was happy to see all the support it received. I think SAAC did a great job, especially since they usually only fundraise, and this was to help raise awareness for a cause." With the help of SAAC and the NCAA, the message has been spread: Don't drive drunk.