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## Local golfer Michael Todd turns pro

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COSHOCTON — Mike McCullough is a name the local sports fans are very familiar with.

A Coshocton native, McCullough is currently a member of the PGA's Champions Tour with an impressive professional golfing career already to his credit.

While Michael Todd hasn't yet gotten to the same level as McCullough, he is giving it a whirl.

The past month has been quite a whirlwind for the River View High School graduate and Roscoe-area resident.

First, it was the Division II national championships where he tied for 43rd place. Immediately following the conclusion of that tournament Todd bested the field at River Greens to take the Coshocton Invitational title.

Following that tournament, Todd decided to try and take his golf game to the next level as he tries to work himself up the professional ranks.

"I had some sponsorship money come in so I decided to go a little earlier," Todd said. "I originally had planned to play in the MOGA (Mid Ohio Golf Association championship at Hickory Flats) and then declare, but (former coach) Brad Baker basically told me that since I already have sponsorship money, I you might as well go."

The sponsorship money was important as a qualifier for the Nationwide Tour costs \$350 to participate. Individuals who do qualify, the rest of the tournament costs nothing.

Todd's first professional event was a Nationwide Tour-qualifying tournament event in Knoxville, Tenn.

"I played really well, but didn't have my "A" game," Todd said. "I was pretty nervous at first."

Nationwide Tour qualifier events are 18-hole shootouts where as many as 14 golfers make the cut.

The Nationwide Tour is the developmental tour for the U.S. based PGA Tour, and features professional golfers who have either failed to score well enough at that level's Qualifying School (the main tour's qualifying tournament, popularly referred to as "Q-School") to earn their PGA Tour card, or who have done so but then failed to win enough money to stay at that level.

Those who are on the top 25 of the money list at year's end are given PGA Tour memberships for the next season.

Last week, Todd was at Spring Creek Golf Club in Gordonsville, Va. participating in a Tarheel Tour event which costs \$900 to enter. There, he fired a 3-over-par and missed the first round cut by two shots.

The Tarheel Tour has been conducting three and four day events since 2002.

Still, he continues to focus on his goals.

"I plan to play the rest of the summer to see how my game stacks up," Todd said.

PGA Tour qualifying school is also an option.

"That's the tough route to go, but if it looks like I stack up that's always an option, but right now I just want to play out this year and win a little money."

Playing for the University of Charleston (W.Va.) in the Division II championships, Todd got off to a solid start with

opening rounds of 76 and 69 to stand in a tie for sixth place. The 69 on day two was just one of four scores in the 60s for the entire weekend. Todd closed the tournament with rounds of 86 and 74.

"That third day the wind was up and they had the course set up like a U.S. Open with the high rough," Todd said. "Things started going down hill a little bit and everything snowballed from there."

The nationals ended on a Friday and that weekend Todd was on hand at River Greens for the Coshocton Invitational.

Todd torched the course on day two of the tournament with a 64 to win the tournament by eight shots.

He's hoping that kind of experience will pay off in the long run.

"I just want to try and make a little money this year and then go at it full tilt next year if it looks like my game can stack up," he said.

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