

New Mercy golf team tees off for first time

According to athletic director Mary Ella Marion, Mercy High School, Baltimore, is always looking to add a new sport to their athletic program. So with 20-plus students showing an interest in golf last fall, Marion took the ball and ran with it, now adding a 10th sport to their program.

The Magic (1-1) opened their season on April 3 against Bryn Mawr School (1-0), competing in the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland along with 11 other schools. The team is coached by Harry Bortner, whose daughter, Christine, first picked up her clubs at the age of 3 and is now a freshman on the team.

"Golf is such a great sport, and I'm happy to help out with the team. My main focus for the girls is for them to have fun," said Bortner.

The team of nine is led by co-captains senior Theresa Lippy and junior Veronica Gross. Both players have extensive experience with the sport and have been long-standing members of the local Junior Golf program.

Gross, a player with a strong drive off the tee, can hit it straight for 200 yards consistently. "I've been playing since I was 7 years old. There are seven kids in my family, and we all play golf," said Gross. "I really enjoy the mental discipline of the game and the need to focus."

The top nine selected for the team this season came to the program with a fairly solid knowledge of the game, their own clubs and some course experience. The team practices at Pine Ridge in Lutherville and earlier in the year had a chance to play nine holes at Coach Bortner's home course, Sparrows Point Country Club.

In addition to Lippy, Gross and Christine Bortner are juniors Brooke Bennett and Sarah Sternberg, sophomores Colleen Monaghan and Sarah Peregoy, and freshmen Maeve Burke and Lexie Bittner.

Though only six players are able to compete in match play, all will have the chance

to represent their school during the short six-week season with the hopes of bringing more players on next season.