

# Eagles Highlights



"I had several pieces fall into place, and the camaraderie factor on this team was huge, too," he said.

He added: "It was a great way to get back into coaching."

## KVAC Scholars Dinner

On May 4, the Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference held its annual Senior Scholars Banquet at the Augusta Civic Center. The event brought together the top ten senior scholars from each of the Conference's 29 schools.

Attending from Erskine were Lilja Bernheim, Sarah Pleau, Kayla Goggin, Mackenzie Gayer, Caleigh Charlebois, Amelia Bailey, Christina Hodgkins, Emma McCormac, Jordan Bowie, and Kyle Zembroski.

The event is sponsored by the Athletic Directors of the Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference. Attendees are treated to dinner and each school's scholars are invited to the stage to be recognized. The highlight of the evening is the awarding of \$500 scholarships, one to a scholar from every school.

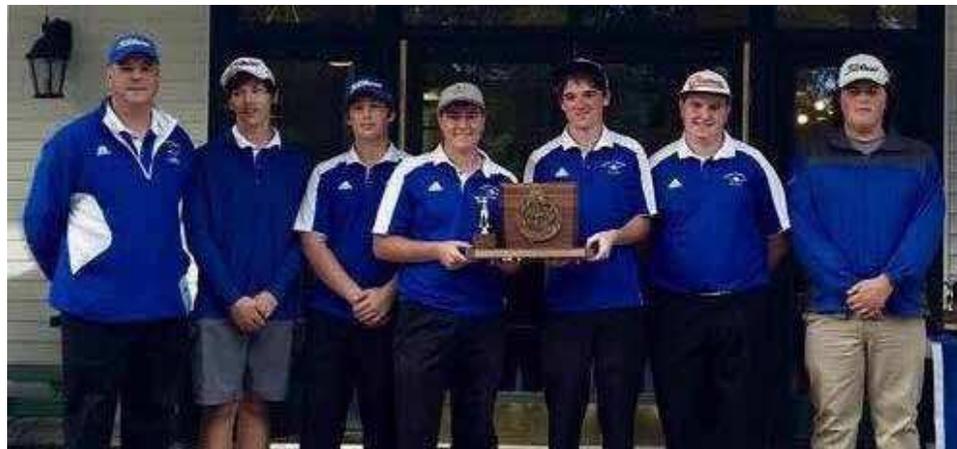
## Golf Champs

The Erskine golf team had a banner year, as the undefeated team won the KVAC Championship and then went on to win the State Class B Championship a week later. A great write-up was provided on October 9 by *Kennebec Journal* staff writer Drew Bonifant:

The turnaround began in the spring. Right around the time the members of the Erskine Academy golf team, still stinging from adding to its string of also-ran finishes in the state championships, gathered in Mark Bailey's classroom to promise their coach that there wouldn't be another one.

"They dropped by my classroom and said 'Coach, we're going to be really good,'" Bailey said. "All of them, really."

Turns out it was more than just bravado. The Eagles went to work in the summer, won in the fall and finished it off on Saturday, shooting



Eagles Golf team left to right: Coach Bailey; Conner Paine '19; Justin Browne '19; Brandon Keezer '17; Robert Harmon '17; Aaron Pion '18; Kay Grady '18

317 to edge defending champion Cape Elizabeth (325) at Natanis Golf Course to win the Class B state championship, the school's first-ever golf title...

"...It's unbelievable," Bailey said. "We've finished fifth, sixth and seventh the last three years, and just to get into that top spot, it's like a dream come true..."

...Confidence was in ample supply among the Erskine players, even with a Cape Elizabeth team that returned last fall's individual champion in Ryan Collins leading the competition. The Eagles qualified two freshmen for last year's individual championships, rolled to the Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference B championship in the regular season and had the home-course advantage at Natanis' 36-hole course. They knew they'd be in the mix — and with a break or two, leading it.

"These guys are out here every day, they know every inch of this golf course," Bailey said. "We thought we'd be one of the contenders, but the southern Maine schools have just been so strong in this tournament."

This time, the school from South China was the one pacing the field. Sophomores Justin Browne and Connor Paine had 80s at Natanis's Tomahawk course, as did senior Robert Harmon, but the biggest impact came from a player who wasn't in the fold last year. Junior Aaron Pion, a transfer from Winslow, fired a 77 to



In addition to his team winning the Class B State Golf Championship, coach Mark Bailey was named as the KVAC Class B Golf Coach of the Year. Congratulations are also in order for golfers Connor Paine, Aaron Pion, Robert Harmon, Brandon Keezer, and Justin Browne for being named to the KVAC All Conference team for 2016.

lead the Eagles, using back-to-back birdies to stabilize himself after going 3-over his first two holes.

"I figured whatever I did, it would help my team one way or another," Pion said. "I knew we had the players capable of shooting around what I shot today, but being able to know that my score helped push my team through to a victory is just unbelievable."

"He's a tough kid," Bailey said. "All season long, we've been preaching to these guys, just keep grinding. It's 18 holes, it's a marathon, not a sprint. That's what he did. He didn't give in."

The State Championship win was the first in golf and the fourth State Championship for Erskine. ☪