

## GOLF

# Phil, Meet Nick

Nicholas Palladino '14 earns Phil Mickelson Award, Division III's top honor.

By Ryan Whirty

ALTHOUGH GOLFER NICHOLAS PALLADINO '14 hasn't settled on a major yet, he already has a good idea about what interests him, both in the classroom and in life. In essence, he wants to know what makes people tick.

"I like to think about how people view things, how they think about things," he says.

And for Palladino, that desire to get inside people's heads includes a thorough self-examination. The goal? Simple self-improvement.

Based on Palladino's performance during his freshman year on the golf course, it's hard to imagine how much more he needs to improve. During the regular season, he earned medalist honors at four different tournaments, garnering Liberty League Rookie and Player of the Year honors.

He earned a trip to the NCAA championships in May, where he played two solid rounds before being named the winner of the 2011 Phil Mickelson Award. Given annually to the most outstanding freshman in Division III golf, the award is named for the Masters-winning PGA golfer and presented by the Phil and Amy Mickelson Foundation.

It was the capstone to a spectacular rookie season.

"That takes the cake easily," says Palladino, of Highland Heights, Ohio. "That was the best achievement of my career."

Rochester golf coach Dan Wesley says that while he knew Palladino would make an impact on the team, the coach couldn't have imagined how well the freshman adjusted to college life and college golf.

But, Wesley says, Palladino has both the mental discipline and the will to succeed.

"Nick has all the qualities that tournament golf requires: mental toughness, positive attitude, determination, and relentless focus," Wesley says. "He also made a commitment this past year to become physically stronger, which allowed him to increase his power and his stamina—which makes a huge difference over the course of a tournament and a season."



But Palladino didn't always possess the psychology of a winner.

"I'll admit that I was a little bit of a hot-head," Palladino says. "I had a bit of a temper. If I had a bad round, I'd get off the course and be down in the dumps. I pretty much let golf determine my mood for the next day."

After taking advice from his father and grandfather and reading a book on golf philosophy, Palladino realized that he couldn't dwell on mistakes.

"It really did help me control my temper," he says. "Golf is a game. It shouldn't affect your life."

That ability to place the sport in perspective was on full display during Palladino's freshman season, and Wesley hopes he'll be able to continue cultivating that frame of mind as he progresses through his Rochester career.

▲ **MEDALIST:** Palladino earned medalist honors at four different tournaments and was named League Rookie of the Year.

He says Palladino has emerged as a capable team leader for the Yellowjackets, and he adds that the young golfer continues to work hard, developments that should help Palladino build on his first year.

"I don't think he'll feel pressure to match this year's accomplishments because he knows each year is a new journey with new challenges," Wesley says. "His freshman year is long gone now, and he is looking forward to making some noise with his teammates as we chase our team goals."

Meanwhile, as he decides on a major, Palladino has found an affinity for history—a class on the mythology of King Arthur and Robin Hood was a favorite—because history provides an ideal discipline for examining why people do what they do, Palladino says.

"I like seeing how things happened in the past," he says. "To avoid bad things happening, we have to learn how to use the past to help the future." R

Ryan Whirty writes about sports for Rochester Review.