

Drew McBrayer had a feeling.

As a member at Elm Lake, McBrayer has had plenty of opportunities to see members of the New Hope High School boys golf team display their skills on the Columbus golf course.

That's why McBrayer believed the first year back in his second stint as NHHS boys golf coach could be special.

"From day one, you could tell not only were they a really close-knit group, but they're all extremely talented and at any point in time any one of them could shoot the best round of the tournament," McBrayer said.

On Tuesday, New Hope wrapped up a dominant two-day effort to capture the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) Class 5A State championship at the Tunica National Golf Course.

New Hope (644) outdistanced second-place Sumrall (662) to win the boys golf program's third state title (2000, Class 4A; 2011, Class 5A) in school history.

"I looked at them (at the first meeting of the year) and said, 'Any one of you can be the best kid, and I want you to compete against each other every day and we are going to pull for each other and we need to push each other to get to the goals we want'," said McBrayer, who was the head coach of the program when it earned its second state title.

New Hope's King Edge earned the individual title on the strength of a final-round +3 (75), the lowest round of the tournament, for a total of 154, which eclipsed Sumrall's Jude Duncan (second, 161).



Edge, a freshman, joins Jamie Sullivan (2001-02, Class 4A), Chase Taylor (2010-11, Class 5A) and Jake Crosson (2016-17, Class 5A and 2017-18, Class 4A) as New Hope individual state champions.

"It was a great feeling," said Edge, who wanted to win a title for his brother, Katch, who also played golf at New Hope and tied for fourth in the Class 5A State meet in 2023. "I think I am the youngest champion in New Hope history. I grew based off what my brother did."

William Lanford and Cadence Forrester (tied for 11th, 166), Rhett Fleming (tied for 13th, 167), Joshua Bradberry (tied for 16th, 168) and Lee Stockton (tied for 19th, 169) also played for New Hope and

showcased the program's championship depth that was on display from the first match of the season.

McBrayer said the team used a fifth-place finish at the 2025 Class 5A State Championship at Elm Lake as motivation. He said the players were disappointed with a score of 657 that was 17 shots behind champion East Central. McBrayer said the closeness of the team amplified the competition within the group and pushed everyone to be at their best.

In fact, Stockton said the showing at the 2025 Class 5A State meet "hurt a little bit" because the team didn't do as well as it had hoped.
Even when individuals experienced the natural "ebbs and flows" of golf, McBrayer said the team showed a high level of maturity. He said from the Region 1 meet on everyone practiced well and were "hitting their stride" for the state meet. McBrayer said it just so happened that Edge emerged from the pack to take the top spot.

"He played extremely well," McBrayer said. "You could tell early on he and Josh were playing really well. King and Josh were right there with each other through the first nine holes or so Tuesday. King was able to keep it going on the back nine."

At the Class 5A, Region 1 meet Monday, Oct. 7, at Lion Hills Golf Club in Columbus, New Hope won the title with a 312. Lanford was second in the individual competition with a 74. Stockton tied for third (77), Forrester tied for sixth (80), Fleming tied for eighth (81), Ian Bouchillon, a senior, was 10th (83) and Bradberry and Edge tied for 11th (85).

In the regular season, New Hope recorded five first-place finishes, two seconds (to Oxford and Tupelo) and a third (to Tupelo and Lewisburg).

"(The competition on the team) made you try harder," Edge said. "It gave you that part where you weren't going to give up and you were going to work as hard as you could to win."

Individually, Stockton was the team's highest finisher six times. He tied with either Edge, Forrester and Bradberry on three of those occasions. Edge tied for the top spot in three regular-season events.

"The competition on the team gave us motivation because it let us know whoever was out there was out there for a reason," Stockton said.

The team's second event – Sept. 1 at Mallard Pointe Golf Course in Sardis – set the tone when Edge and Stockton tied for first with 75s. Lanford tied for fifth (79), Forrester was 11th (80) and Fleming and Bradberry tied for 12th (81) in a meet that included Caledonia, Lafayette and North Pontotoc.

"(The competition on the team) helped because you knew when you played bad there was somebody there to pick you up," Edge said. "No offense to Lee, but Lee didn't play well as he could at the state meet but we still won because we had guys who were willing to go out there and were good enough to shoot a score."

Jaxon Beams, Easton Mularz and Jack Moore, a senior, rounded out a varsity lineup that returns the nucleus of the 2026 championship core and gives Edge and Stockton plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future.

"You can't win four in a row if you don't win one," Edge said. "At some point, you're going to have to learn to play with the nerves and the feelings and things like that. This was our first time to really be in the lead, and I think it will help us play with a lead and win golf tournaments."