

Fundraising efforts will remember Rondina, military veterans

Rock Rec Center is working on plans for a POW/MIA Memorial at the base of its driveway and an artificial turf outdoor playing field in the name of Matthew Rondina

TOM ROBINSON
For The Dallas Post

The Rock Recreation Center in Trucksville will raise money for two memorial causes with its Rockathon, scheduled for Sept. 20-22.

The Rock is working on plans for both a POW/MIA Memorial at the base of its driveway and an artificial turf outdoor sports playing field in the name of Matthew Benjamin Rondina, a Kingston Township Raiders youth football player who died at age 13 in 1998 from brain cancer.

A personal athletic challenge from one of Rondina's friends, a 5K trail run and a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, is part of the weekend along with other community activities.

Elijah Miller, development director at Rock Recreation, will

attempt to run 54 miles Friday. Rondina wore number 54 as a junior football player and many of the weekend's events have a connection to that number. There will also be a Watch Fire ceremonial burning from Friday night, Sept. 20 into the following morning in memory of Prisoners of War and Missing in Action soldiers.

The 5K trail run and 3-on-3 basketball tournaments are scheduled for Sept. 21 when live music and food and craft vendors are also planned to create a carnival atmosphere at Rock Recreation. Related basketball activities, including a two-hour camp that is included with registration in the tournament, continue Sept. 22.

Miller, 27, is a Dallas and Penn State graduate currently pursuing his MBA at The University of Scranton.

IF YOU GO ...

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During his days as a high school football player with the Mountaineers, he always played with the number 54 written on his arm to remember his friend and former junior football teammate. His latest effort to honor Rondina's memory is the "strong run" in which he plans to cover a mile at a time and complete each mile with 10 pull-ups.

"Basically, my goal is within a 12-hour period to run 54 miles and do 540 pull-ups," Miller said.

Miller has run up to 25 miles

in training efforts.

"Usually, when you train for something like this, you do 50 to 75 percent of the goal in training," Miller said. "Then, you try to let heart and adrenaline take care of the rest."

Miller is trying to call attention to fundraising efforts for the Matthew Benjamin Rondina Memorial Sports Field. He said the total project, including site preparation and bleachers next to the field, will cost close to \$1 million and the non-profit organization has progressed about

\$175,000 toward that goal.

Plans call for Rondina's number 54 to be stitched into the turf in the middle of the field, which would become the new home of the Kingston Township Raiders.

"It would be a community field," Miller said. "Rock Rec sports and camps, Kingston Township Raiders football and all other types of sports and camps would use it."

Miller said the field would be lined for multiple sports.

The POW/MIA activities are part of being patriotic and putting country above community, according to Miller.

Former Korean War POW Fred Searles and Debra Kay Anderson, the daughter of an MIA U.S. Air Force pilot, will be the guest speakers at a Watch Fire Service. The Watch Fire will be built at dusk and continue to burn until dawn and will be the center of music, prayer and other activities for veterans organizations.

"It's also an honorable flag burning night where, if people

want to come from the community and honorably get rid of an old flag, they can," Miller said. "... People can stop and pray for troops, share their stories, that kind of thing."

The 5K run will include different physical challenges. After the first 1K (six-tenths of a mile) loop at Rock Recreation, competitors will do 54 push-ups. They will do 54 sit-ups after the second, 54 jumping jacks after the third and 54 mountain climbers after the fourth.

The top male and female finishers will receive a one-year membership to the Rock Rec Center and Valley Tennis & Swim Club.

Entry forms for the 5K trail run and 3-on-3 basketball are available at rockrec.org where there are also videos explaining the events.

Miller also wrote and recorded a song "54 Soldiers" in which 70 cents of every 99 cent fee paid for an iTunes download will go directly to the two fundraisers.

Back Mountain trio leads Holy Redeemer duffers

Mariano Medico, Chase Makowski and Michael Boland lead Royals to team title at Wyoming Valley Conference Tryba Preseason Tournament

TOM ROBINSON
For The Dallas Post

Mariano Medico, Chase Makowski and Michael Boland spent many of their summer days at Huntsville Golf Club, golfing together, working on their individual games and preparing for the high school season where they are teammates at Holy Redeemer.

That preparation appears to have paid off.

Medico, a Shavertown resident, won his second straight individual title Monday at the Wyoming Valley Conference Tryba Preseason Tournament. With help from Dallas residents Makowski and Boland, Medico also led Holy Redeemer to the team title.

"It's a good tournament to sort of feel out the competition, feel out where we are on the team level," said Medico, who shot even-par 71 and led Holy Redeemer to a 17-stroke team victory over Crestwood. "With the high expectations that we have as a team this year, for me, it was to see what we are up against in the conference."

"There are a couple of teams that can give us trouble in the conference, but if we are play our game, we have a real good shot at the conference championship."

Medico also placed third in the Tryba Tournament as a freshman and second as a sophomore before picking up the first of his two wins last season.

His current and future teammate helped the Royals dominate the tournament. Both Medico and Makowski made commitments to play Division I college golf at Monmouth University in New Jersey during August.

"We're both going to the same school, both playing Division I golf, so we're really excited," Medico said.

Makowski tied for fifth

with a 76 and was one of four players who made up the Holy Redeemer team score.

Boland shot a 79, which did not count in the team score because four Holy Redeemer players shot 78 or better. It was plenty good enough, however, to have helped with the team title if his score was needed. It also made him one of just 11 players to break 80 out of 76 in the field.

Medico needed to recover from a bad hole to win his title.

He offset a triple bogey on 7 at Fox Hill Country Club and another bogey with four birdies.

"It was nice that he can have a bad hole in the middle and be able to get it all back," Holy Redeemer coach Art Brunn Jr. told The Times Leader. "I'm proud that he didn't give up and he hung in there like that."

Medico made it back to even par at 16 when he recovered from a hooked tee shot to punch out from the trees 100 yards away all the way to the front of the green. From there, he made a 25-footer for a birdie-3.

"That was really big for me to get it back to even with two holes to play," said Medico, a junior member at Huntsville, who is also a member at Fox Hill where his father and grandfather have been long-time members.

Medico finished fifth in the state in Class AA last year. He considers a state title to be within his capabilities.

"Last year, I sort of said to myself, 'if you can place, it would be great,'" Medico said. "This year, I feel like I really want to win that state championship."

"... I think I'm going to go in with a little different attitude than last year and go in there thinking I can compete to win."

Medico has learned he



Holy Redeemer's Mariano Medico, left, and Chase Makowski read the first green as they wait for North Pocono to putt during the District 2 Team Golf Championship at Fox Hill Country Club in Exeter.

DISTRICT 2 TOURNAMENT

VVC individuals will try to qualify for the District 2 Tournament when they return to Fox Hill Sept. 23. The District 2 Tournament will be Oct. 7 at Elmhurst Country Club followed by PIAA East Regionals at Golden Oak Golf Club Oct. 15 and the state tournament at Heritage Hills Golf Resort Oct. 21-22.

can rely on his long game, so his concentration is often on execution in the short game in order to produce the best scores possible.

"I think I'm sort of at the point where I'm hitting the ball the same just about every time I play," Medico said. "I think it's just a matter of if my putts drop. That's the focus for me

right now — my putting.

"I know that if I can roll the ball well, then I'm going to score well. That's the thing I've really been working on and I know I have to get a little better around the greens because I've been a little streaky with my chipping."

Holy Redeemer shot a 298 and Crestwood 315. Coughlin was next

with 325, followed by Tunkhannock with 336.

Dallas shot 339 to place fifth out of 13 teams. Lake-Lehman was one of the three schools that entered individuals, but not enough for a four-player team score.

Medico won the individual title by two strokes over teammate Andrew Crossin.

Sean Solytsiak led Tunkhannock by shooting 77 to finish seventh overall.

Chad DeBona led Dallas with an 82, one shot better than teammate Ryan Georgetti.

Nick Egan and Adam Motovidak each shot 84 for Lake-Lehman.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Hole in one achieved

Bill VanSanten achieved a hole in one on June 20 at the Newberry Estate Country Club.

VanSanten was using a nine iron on hole number 2. The hole in one was witnessed by Claire Evans.

Raiders invite participants

Kingston Township children between the ages of 5 and 11 are invited to attend Kingston Township Raiders football practices between 5:30 and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Center Street Park.

For more information, call Stacy Wydra at 301-8841.

Father-son tourney scheduled

The Cook's Pharmacy Second Annual Father Son Baseball Tournament and Home Run Derby to benefit the Dallas Foundation will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7 at the Back Mountain Little League Field.

Games times are 10 a.m. for 9-10 year-olds, noon for the Home Run Derby and 1:30 p.m. for 11-12-year olds.

Registration fee is \$50 for each father/son team which includes a t-shirt for both father and son. Children must be league age 9, 10, 11 or 12 years old to participate.

Registration deadline is Aug. 24. Registration forms may be dropped off or mailed to Cook's Pharmacy, 1909 Memorial Highway, Shavertown.

YOUTH FOOTBALL RESULTS

Jr. Mounts win big over Kingston Twp.

C TEAM Dallas 38 Kingston Twp. 6

The Dallas Junior Mounts C team had a successful start to their season, defeating the Kingston Township Raiders, 38-6.

KT won the coin toss and elected to defer. Dallas chose to receive and recovered KT's onside kick. Dallas RB Jared Adamski found a huge hole on the first play from scrimmage and scampered 58 yards for a touchdown. Mitch Burgess added the 2-point conversion and Dallas had an 8-0 lead.

The Junior Mount defense held KT to 3-and-out and took possession of the ball. Adamski dropped back to pass and, with all of his receivers covered, ran down the sideline for another long Dallas touchdown. Mitch Burgess added the 2-point conversion and Dallas led, 16-0.

Adamski added two more touchdowns in the second quarter with Lucas Shultz adding the 2-point conversion and Dallas built a commanding 32-0 lead at halftime.

In the second half, Jace Chopyak added one more touchdown on a long run up the middle for Dallas.

The Junior Mount defense was stingy all day, giving up minimal yards. Lucas Shultz had wosacks, Joe "Missle" Peters had four tackles for a loss and a fumble recovery, Ryan Cuba had five tackles for a loss and Alex Hajikowski had an interception to lead the charge on defense.



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