

SPORTS > OC VARSITY > HIGH SCHOOL GOLF

Crean Lutheran's Tyler Guo finishes strong again, wins CIF State championship



Crean Lutheran's Tyler Guo hits a tee shot as he competes in the CIF State Boys High School Golf Championships at San Gabriel Country Club in San Gabriel on Wednesday, May 30, 2018. (Photo by Mark Rightmire, Orange County Register/SCNG)

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SAN GABRIEL >> Tyler Guo didn't know his lead was in jeopardy, but a sixth sense told him not to blow it. So, as he did a week ago, he finished like a champion, a state champion.

Guo sank a 15-foot, bogey-saving putt on the 18th hole Wednesday and won the CIF-State Boys Golf Championship at San Gabriel Country Club with a 3-under-par 68, edging Torrey Pines' Caden Fioroni and Atherton Menlo's Max Ting by a single stroke.

Torrey Pines did win the team title in dramatic fashion, losing all of an 11-stroke lead on the back nine to Palm Desert before taking advantage of a final-hole collapse by the Aztecs to finish at 3-over-par 358. Palm Desert finished at 4-over 359.



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Tyler Guo from Crean Lutheran 🏆 #CIFState 🏌️

2:00 PM - May 30, 2018

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The Crean Lutheran junior didn't know exactly what was transpiring on the leaderboard behind him after consecutive birdies got him to 4-under after the 13th hole. Later, needing a 15-foot bogey putt to at least stay at 3-under on No. 18, Guo said he knew he had to make it.

"Something just told me," he said. "Every shot is important; you can't just let that go." While it was his second consecutive victory after winning last week's CIF-SCGA Southern California Regional at Pasadena's Brookside Golf Club, this was different. Last week, when he chipped in on his final to finish a 7-under 65, the win had long been clinched.

This came down to the end.

"I didn't think I could win with this score, to be honest," said Guo, who qualified for next month's California Amateur Championship at La Costa with the victory. "Yesterday, I was having a practice round, and I was thinking the (winning) score is probably going to around 6- or 5-under."

An accomplished youth player, Guo, a USC commit, didn't play high school golf until this season, his first at Crean Lutheran after transferring from Pacific Academy in Irvine. He didn't have a birdie run like last week, when played his last nine holes at 4-under, but he did nearly drain a chip on the 12th before following with another birdie on the par-5 13th.

Neither Fioroni and Ting seriously challenged Guo, with both at least two strokes behind him on most of the back nine. In fact, Palm Desert's Charlie Reiter, a future USC teammate, came the closest to catching him, getting to 3-under before suffering a triple-bogey on the 18th.

The two other Orange County golfers in the field Wednesday fared well.

San Clemente junior Alex Pak survived an up-and-down round that saw him hit only five fairways, yet still tie for fourth with an even-par 71.

"My tee shots were all over the place," Pak said, before adding, "my short game, especially my putting, really helped me through this round."

Mater Dei sophomore Andrew Hoekstra tied for 10th at 1-over 72. Starting on No. 10, he was 2-under through his first six holes.

"I had it going the first couple of holes," he said.