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SPORTS



Former Oak Hill standout Blake LeFavour determines the best approach as he gets ready to putt. **Photos by Sean Douglas**

Varner leads after first weekend of Amateur

By Sean Douglas

After the first 36 holes of the 89th annual Hoosier Jiffy Print Grant County Amateur, a familiar face found himself, once again, at the top of the pack.

With a 66 (-6) on the tournament's second day at Arbor Trace, after finishing with a 70 (-2) at the Marion Elks Country Club, eight-time winner Andrew Varner finished the weekend at -8, giving him a one stroke lead heading into the Amateur's final weekend.

"I never was comfortable [at the Elks,]" Varner said. "I have played that course 5,000 times, but I was never comfortable. I just told my wife [and myself] that I was going to go out there and relax today, and I did. It just seemed easy today."

Varner finished the day with six birdies, including a pair of impressive chip-ins on the 9th and 16th holes.

"The short game was definitely my strength," Varner said. "The course was in great shape, so you had to score. I couldn't put it in the hole [at Elks.] Today, any-



Former Eastbrook standout Lance Hoch walks the fairways at the Elks Country Club.

thing I should have done, short-game wise, I did."

With each passing summer, Varner continues to solidify himself as one of the top performers in the illustrious history of the Grant County Amateur.

Last summer, he tied the

tournament record en route to his eighth title.

This year, he is aiming for his ninth, which would put him alone in third place for most Amateur victories. Only Grant County Sport

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Women's sports pioneer tabbed for Hall of Fame

By Sean Douglas

During an era in our nation's history where girls high school athletics were viewed as more of an afterthought, Sue Baker was a visionary, making it her life's work to enable women to achieve their athletic dreams and change the cultural perspective which held women's sports secondary to men's.

It would take the passing of Title IX in 1972 to catapult Baker's dream into a reality.

Baker passed away in the early '70s, right before the groundbreaking Title IX law was passed. Title IX states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

"Pioneers like Sue, came



SUE BAKER

before Title IX, and really paved the way for those that followed in her footsteps," Grant County Sports Hall of Fame President Andy McCord said. "It was not easy doing what she did. It was very difficult to be coaching on the girls' side of things. They didn't have the luxuries the boys' teams had.

"It's a tragedy that she lost her life at a young age, because she was one that deserved to see Title IX come into effect, and she was one that deserved to see the success of girls' high school athletics. A lot of her

players look back at her as a mentor and someone who taught them not only about sports, but about real life."

For her accomplishments, Baker will be posthumously inducted into the Grant County Sports Hall of Fame as part of its 12th class.

From 1962-1968, Baker coached every sport at Marion High School, and did so at a high level. In those six years, her basketball team compiled a record of 84-6, while her volleyball teams won 33 of 36 matches from 1966-1968.

Coaching one sport, and coaching it well, is difficult. Coaching four, and doing so at a high level, arduous.

But Baker believed that all women could be athletes, pushing them to reach their full potential.

"Here is a woman who, again, had all the odds stacked against her because she is coaching girls' athletics in the '60s," McCord said. "She was coaching

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Lions defeat Firefighters in walk-off fashion

By Sean Douglas

To cap off the third week of Marion Babe Ruth Baseball's summer season, two of the 12u division's best teams went toe-to-toe in an exciting, six-inning affair.

Behind some strong, late-game pitching and a crucial gaffe in the field in the game's final at-bat, Jason Clark's Lions defeated Tino Mitchener's Firefighters by a score of 5-4.

"I couldn't ask for any more out of my squad tonight," Clark said. "They did the little things well. When they do that, they can win."

With the score tied at 4-4 heading into the bottom of the sixth, Luke Regnault

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Jayden Johnson standing at third after his triple. **Photo by Sean Douglas**