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A Titleist golf ball rockets into the side of the sand trap and shamefully rolls back to where it started. Sophomore Emily Fey is disappointed with her shot, but she lines up her body over the ball, inhales and swings again. Then again. And again. And again.

It takes Fey five shots to free her ball from the sand trap, but only one shot to sink her putt. Fey knows that these ups and downs on the golf course aren't unheard of, but with such a large day, her mistake may cost her a tournament spot for the upcoming week.

With 19 players, the girls golf team this year is the largest team ever assembled at East. This was head coach Ermanno Ritschl's last year coaching at East, so he allowed every girl that tried out to become a part of the program.

"The last five people [ranked at tryouts] were within one or two shots difference," Ritschl said. "I decided to keep them all."

Allowing so many girls on has increased competition throughout the two teams. The players' own teammates are their toughest competitors.

Varsity tournaments allow six players to compete and most JV tournaments allow five players. The varsity team, comprised of returning state winners, seldom changed this year, leaving the 13 other girls to fight for the only five spots on JV.

"There's such a wide range of ability on the team that competition is higher everywhere on the ladder," Ritschl said. "The girls need to focus and perform for tournament spots."

Tournament spots are determined by the player's individual scores from practice the week before. All of the girls constantly pushed themselves to succeed during practice with the hopes of seeing their name on the email that is sent the following week.

"With limited spots, competition has increased, so posting good practice scores proves that you can play well," senior Jessica Parker said. "But outside of scores, [Ritschl] wants to see you giving all of your effort and focus, that plays a huge role."

Some players agree with Ritschl and support the no-cut tryouts. These players think that cutting girls could lower their self-confidence and make them no longer interested in the sport.

"If girls were cut, that could make them say 'I don't ever want to play golf again,'" senior Rebecca Sheridan said. "I think it's better [that no cuts were made] so they can work for the spots."

The team practices at different country clubs every day, but most clubs can't produce enough tee times to accommodate the large team. While the top 12 players are always guaranteed practice times, that leaves at least three or more of the bottom players without practice, making it harder for them to improve their skills.

"It does frustrate me just a little that he didn't cut people," Fey said. "I mean trust me, sometimes it's nice to have a night without golf practice, but other days it would help to have that extra practice."

That one extra practice could improve Fey's shots. That small amount of extra time could greatly impact her scores.

Fey would line her body up over the ball, inhale and swing, but this time the ball would soar. Then again. And again. And again.