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UIS women's golf team hopes to pick up where it left off

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At the college level, golf has a split season where teams play in the fall and spring.

The University of Illinois Springfield women's team is hoping to pick up where it left off when the spring schedule opens Friday at the Lewis Shootout at Aguila in Phoenix, Ariz.

The Stars broke the school record for team score on back-to-back days last October at the UMSL Triton Invitational at Gateway Golf Links in Madison.

"We ended the fall on a fantastic note," UIS women's coach Nichole Inkel said. "We were beating teams in our conference."

However, UIS doesn't have quite the same look it had in the fall. One of the Stars' top golfers, junior Mallorie Cummings, is academically ineligible.

Inkel admits the loss of Cummings struck a blow.

Sophomore Abby Vorreyer, freshman Caitlin Osborn and Cummings were UIS' Nos. 1 and 2 golfers just a few months ago.

"At the end of the fall, Abby and Caitlyn had an 85 average," Inkel said. "Mallorie had an 86 average. Kelsey Blake's low round was an 89. If Abby, Paige (Luker) and Caitlyn can shoot around the 80 and 83 range, we'll be just fine."

Freshman Brittany Stout replaces Cummings in the lineup.

Warmed up

When the UIS women's and men's teams arrive at their season-opening tournaments, they'll surprisingly have had a few practice rounds under their belts. Warmer weather a couple weeks ago allowed them to play The Rail Golf Course.

"Last year, we didn't get outside until we went to Florida the first time," UIS men's coach Frank Marsaglia said. "When you're not used to being outside, it's hard to really get your swing down. That weekend will pay dividends when we go down to Florida next weekend."

The Stars open the season March 16 against Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla. Three UIS golfers finished in the top five in a few fall tournaments. Junior Mike McKillips led the way with a runner-up effort at the Wisconsin-Parkside Fall Invitational. Juniors Ryan McKillips and Shane McCafferty tied for third at the St. Joseph Invite.

"We've got mainly juniors who have been with the program for two years, and we're finally developing into a pretty good squad," Marsaglia said.

"We've got a group of six that are going to push each other."

Juniors Zach Phillips and Mark Klinger and sophomore Zach Szuminski will also contend for a spot in the top five.

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