

A sweet 16th for the Sailors

Steamboat golfer earns the program's best finish ever at state championships

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Steamboat Pilot & Today

After a tough first day at the Colorado High School Activities Association 4A Girls Golf State Championships, Steamboat Springs High School freshman Kaitlyn Grommeck sat in 22nd.

With an 84 on day two, Grommeck moved up to finish 16th with a total of 176 strokes at Tiara Rado Golf Course in Grand Junction on Wednesday. The top-20 finish is the best from a Sailor in the seven-year history of the girls golf program.

Grommeck hit for par on seven holes, bogeyed six holes and double-bogeyed four. She was one under on hole 12, a par three. She was just four over par on the back nine.

Her goal going into the second day was to keep up her strong

putting and avoid having one bad 12-stroke hole, which brought her down on day one.

Grommeck certainly did that.

Because she's a freshman, Grommeck has three more years to come back and continue making history on the links. She has a summer full of camps and training.

Through just seven years of existence, the Sailors girls golf program has always been headed by Shannon Hanley, who fosters a fun environment for those looking to learn something new and keeps things competitive for the more seasoned golfers such as Grommeck.

Grommeck won multiple events this year and finished fourth at regionals to qualify for state.

Last year, junior Alexandra Culver and senior Sophia Gowdy became the first Sailors to qualify for the state championships.



SHANNON HANLEY/COURTESY PHOTO

Steamboat Springs High School freshman Kaitlyn Grommeck finished 16th at the Colorado High School Activities Association 4A Girls Golf State Championships on Wednesday, marking the best finish ever for the Sailors girls golf program.

Spoke Talk: The town hill and the new West

We are the lucky ones, here in Steamboat.

Our backyard "town hill" is an 8,200-foot gem that beckons from all directions — Emerald Mountain. During the summer months, it's common to see people riding their mountain bikes straight from home (or the office) to the trailhead for a quick lap. It is accessible and well-cared for. It would be rare to find a community member who has not had a positive experience on the trail network.

Emerald brings trail users up from the base through layers of sagebrush and scrub oak, transitioning to aspen groves buffeted by ferns, and the occasional shady, north-facing stand of evergreen timber. It's no surprise that cyclists have been coming up here in pursuit of rolling, cross-country terrain for decades now.

As a relative newcomer to the cycling scene in Steamboat myself, it helps to understand our current context of "growing pains" through the lens of the past. Recently, I took Pete Wither out for a pint at Mountain Tap.



He served as board president of Routt County Riders almost 30 years ago, in these early days of mountain biking and trail advocacy. Despite his wise old age, he retains the youthful heart and soul of a mountain biker. He is quick with a laugh, and his playful spirit shines through in the way he tells his story.

As early as the 1990s, Routt County Riders had already come onto the scene with informal meetings over beers and Chinese food. At the time, they were advocating for the creation of the Yampa River Core Trail, safer travel for cyclists on gravel roads around town, and the start of a land swap process on Emerald to wrestle the mountain from the perilous grip of the State Land Board.

Steamboat has certainly changed



LARAINÉ MARTIN/COURTESY PHOTO

Routt County Riders volunteers and conservation trails staff members rebuild berms on NPR trail during a volunteer work event.

since the 1990s. The number of trail users we see riding on Emerald in the summertime is increasing. This is not the challenge. The real issue is our individual perceptions of what this implies, and the community narrative that we choose to rally around as a result.

The early mountain biking movement in Steamboat was focused on gaining access to trails for cyclists,

keeping large tracts of land out of the hands of developers, and shaping a more positive image for cyclists as a whole. Today, we are at a crossroads where recreational trail use is scapegoated for the concern that local residents have about overall growth, as if it were demonstrative of all the issues a more populous community could bring down upon us.

The reality is that growth will continue to occur, and we can work with that. We can work with increased traffic on our trails, and we will pledge our dedication to the cause for trail maintenance and community volunteerism. "We are the lucky ones", here in Steamboat, but we're certainly not the only ones who deserve to be that lucky. Our ethos should shift towards being more open and welcoming to new recreationalists. Sometimes it only takes one amazing experience in the outdoors to ignite a lifetime of service to give back.

A welcoming community of trail users creates more likelihood that people will feel included in stewardship opportunities and allow these public land experiences to shape their perception of the new American West. We'd love to see you come lend a hand at a volunteer work session this summer, or contribute to the movement by becoming a member of RCR. We are here for the ride, and we hope you'll join us. Learn more about local trails and volunteer opportunities at www.routtcountyriders.org.