The recent success shared by the Macon County High School Golf teams is bearing fruit. Senior Kaleigh Chitwood has accepted a scholarship offer to attend Cumberland University in Lebanon, TN and play golf.

This past fall golf season Kaleigh helped guide the Macon County women's golf team to a runner-up finish in the TSSAA State Golf Tournament. It wasn't her first time at "the show."

Kaleigh has the distinct pleasure of playing in the state golf tournament all four years of her high school golf career. MCHS Head Golf Coach Beverly Shoulders commented, "For a player to get to compete at the state level all four years in their chosen sport is a special accomplishment." "I am so proud of Kaleigh and all she has done."

Kaleigh will be signing with Cumberland University joining an increasing number of student athletes from our region. Cumberland is a four year liberal arts school which was founded in 1843 by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. At one time the Cumberland School of Law was said to have had more of its alumni elected to the US Congress than any other school in the South. The University is located in nearby Lebanon, TN and this will be the third year in which Macon County student-athletes have been offered an athletic scholarship from this fine school. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State under FDR, and Baltimore Oriole 1st Round Draft pick Chris Smith are notable alumni.

Cumberland competes in the Mid-South Conference in the Western Division. They play in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) which is made up of smaller colleges and universities across the United States.

A former MCHS golfer himself, Scott Wilkerson, is the Head Coach of both the men's and women's golf programs at Cumberland University. "We like to recruit golfers we see a lot of potential in and we think Kaleigh can play some great golf for our school." In his ninth season at the helm at Cumberland, Coach Wilkerson is graduating three members from the women's team. He hopes Kaleigh can help fill that void.

"We were thrilled when Kaleigh won a playoff this past season to take the 4th place medalist in the district tournament." "It was her first head-to-head playoff in competition and she won on the first hole," remarked mom, Lisa Chitwood. "Gosh we have so many wonderful memories of golf with her from the time she was playing in the 6th grade."

Her dad added, "We are blessed to have a sport that the whole family enjoys." "We have spent many hours playing courses all over and enjoying it together." Keith also commented, "I think it was important for us try to expose and challenge Kaleigh to different courses to help sharpen her game." In a small school environment it is very important for not just the player and the school coach to try to get better, but it is imperative that parents be involved in order to help nurture a child's athletic talents.

The golfing community here in Macon County is a close knit group. With Cumberland University golf playing at nearby Five Oaks, Windtree, and the Old Hickory Country Club many may follow this team in the future. Everyone wants to wish Kaleigh good luck and congratulate her for this outstanding accomplishment.