

# First men's golf national championship for MCC

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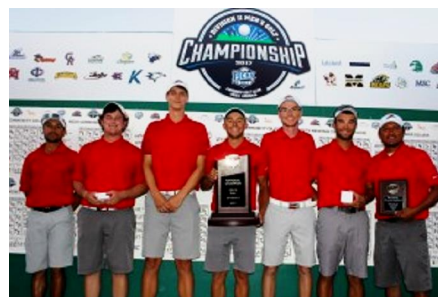


*Jeff Kelley roars with excitement after sinking a 25-foot birdie putt on hole 18 to solidify Mesa's National Championship. (Aaron Webster/Mesa Community College)*

The bird is the word and the Mesa Community College Thunderbirds are the national champions.

The Mesa Thunderbirds men's golf team climbed to the pinnacle of competition and captured the school's first men's golf national championship with a five-stroke victory at Longbow Golf Club in Mesa.

Down by two strokes heading into the final day of play to Mississippi Gulf Coast CC, Mesa shot 15 birdies to pass the Bulldogs and finish with a team tournament total of 1155.



*Mesa Thunderbirds men's golf team are national champions. (Aaron Webster/Mesa Community College)*

**Dean Harpe** birdied four holes on the front nine alone to pace Mesa throughout the day. Harpe shot a one-under-par (70) for the day. **Jacob Guess**, **Bradley Pottle** and **Jeff Kelley** all shot 73's with **Gage Grimes** shooting a 75.

"All the credit goes to my guys," said MCC head coach John Guerrero, "they earned it."

For Guerrero, with all the many wins and national tournament appearances on both the men's and women's side has accomplished the greatest prize of winning a national championship.

Taking the helm of the men's team in 2005, Guerrero led teams have finished within the top 10 seven times, claiming three third-place finishes and a runner-up finish in 2014.

Guerrero was also honored as the NJCAA Coach of the Year, another new accomplishment to add to his many accolades.

But one thing Guerrero kept alluding to after it was all said and done was his players: "They are great kids who kept grinding, I'm so happy for them and their families."

Individually, all five Mesa Thunderbirds walked away as All-Americans. **Harpe**, **Guess** and **Kelley** were named First Team All-Americans, **Pottle** Second Team All-American and **Grimes** with Honorable Mention All-American.

Kelley finished tied for third individually with a four-day total of 287. **Harpe** was fifth with a 289 total, **Guess** finished sixth with a 290 total. Guess also finished with the most pars for the tournament by an individual, shooting 54 pars out of 72 holes, a 72 percent average. **Pottle** tied for ninth place with a 292 finish and **Grimes** finished tied for 24th place with a 298 total.

The crowning finale of the tournament was the final putt by **Kelley** on hole 18. With roughly a 25-foot putt, Kelley drained the birdie without blinking and then gave a tremendous roar to the on looking crowd who mimicked his excitement. Mesa knew then they had achieved the dream.

For Mesa Community College athletics, this is their 19th national championship in school history and the first for either golf programs.

**- Aaron Webster is the sports information director for Mesa Community College.**

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