



PGA TOUR QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT
Bear Lakes Country Club
Lakes Course (LA), Links Course (LI)
West Palm Beach, Florida
December 2-7, 2009

First Round Notes – December 2, 2009

The weather for the opening round featured windy conditions at 10-20 mph out of the South-Southeast, with gusts up to 30 mph. A couple of brief showers hit Bear Lakes Country Club in the afternoon, with more rain predicted for Thursday. Temperatures reached into the mid-80s.

Troy Merritt posted a 5-under 67 on the Links Course to take the opening-round lead at the 108-hole PGA TOUR Qualifying Tournament. He leads Jay Williamson (Lakes Course) by one shot and Ty Harris (LI), Billy Horschel (LI) and Andrew Buckle (LI) by two strokes.

The 24-year-old Merritt recently wrapped up his rookie season on the Nationwide Tour, finishing No. 39 on the official money list after making 12 cuts in 17 starts. His lone top-10 finish was a victory at the Mexico Open. Merritt is participating in the Final Stage of Q-School for the second straight year, having finished T137 last year to earn conditional status on the Nationwide Tour in 2009.

Jay Williamson is making his seventh start at Q-School Finals since 1990, with 1997 the only year he failed to earn his PGA TOUR card. The years he was successful included 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2008. Williamson finished the 2009 PGA TOUR ranked No. 184 on the money list.

Four players who earned their PGA TOUR card for 2010 by graduating (top 25) from the Nationwide Tour are seeking to improve their position this week at Q-School Finals: Chris Baryla (No. 19), Steve Wheatcroft (No. 20), Vance Veazey (No. 23) and Mathias Gronberg (No. 24). Their scores after the first round are as follows: Veazey (73/LA), Wheatcroft (74/LA), Gronberg (74/LA), Baryla (76/LA). These players will not count toward the top 25 and ties who will earn their PGA TOUR card through Q-School, or against the next number nearest 50 to determine fully-exempt Nationwide Tour membership.

Of the 170-man field, Esteban Toledo has the most appearances at final stage since 1990, with 12 starts. Toledo opened up with a 4-over 76 at the Lakes Course. Toledo is coming off of a 29th-place finish on the Nationwide Tour money list. Next on the list (and in the field) with 11 starts at Q-School Finals since 1990 are Jeff Brehaut (73/LA) and Vance Veazey (73/LI).

Three past Q-School medalists are participating this week at Bear Lakes, including 2003 winner Mathias Gronberg (74/LA), 2002 champion Jeff Brehaut (73/LA) and 1992 co-medalist Skip Kendall (74/LI).

Just 22 out of 170 players posted sub-par scores during the first round of Q-School, with six of those scores coming at the Lakes Course and 16 at the Links Course.

The first-round scoring averages for the two courses - Lakes Course (75.105) and Links Course (74.381).

The toughest holes on the two courses - the par-4 No. 7 on the Lakes Course with a scoring average of 4.721 and the par-4 No. 12 on the Links Course with a scoring average of 4.536

There were no bogey-free rounds during the first round.

Final Stage saw 170 players tee it up after over 1300 applications were taken for the TOUR Qualifying Tournament, which included five pre-qualifying sites, 13 first-stage sites and six second-stage sites. Here's a breakdown of the numbers:

- 436 players participated at five pre-qualifying sites (224 successful)

- 908 players participated at 13 first-stage sites (305 successful)

- 469 players participated at six second-stage sites (132 successful)

- 170 players playing in Final Stage (including 34 exempt players and four Nationwide Tour Top 25)

Of the 170-man field, 77 players earned their ticket into the six-day event by successfully navigating the first two stages of Q-School. Of those players, four had to additionally go through the pre-qualifying tournament: Mark Anderson (75/LI), Ray Beaufils (79/LI), Sunny Kim (72/LA), Grant Leaver (75/LI).

By the numbers ... The top 25 players and ties at the conclusion of the tournament will receive 2010 PGA TOUR cards, while the next number of players nearest 50 will receive full status on the Nationwide Tour. All remaining players will have conditional status on the Nationwide Tour in 2010.