



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Third-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Ken Looper	62-66-68—196 (-17)
2	Stephan Jaeger	66-67-67—200 (-13)
	Ben Taylor	66-67-67—200 (-13)
4	Four players tied	201 (-12)

Ken Looper holds four-shot lead despite late bogeys at the News Sentinel Open presented by Pilot

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Despite his first two bogeys of the tournament coming on his final two holes Saturday, Ken Looper will take a four-shot lead over Ben Taylor and Stephan Jaeger into the final round of the News Sentinel Open presented by Pilot. Looper, who owned a five-shot lead entering the day, posted a 3-under 68 in the third round but felt like he gave two shots away of what had ballooned to a six-shot lead with two holes remaining in the third round.

“I wish it would have been more after those last couple of holes, but I can’t be disappointed,” Looper said. “I’m still leading, but just disappointed in the last couple [bogeys] on 17 and 18.”

After successfully scrambling 14 out of 14 times, Looper failed to get up and down for the first time at the par-4 17th after catching a bad lie in the rough off the tee and found his first bogey of the week. On the 18th, he hit his drive right down the middle and said there was “no way” he was considering laying up with only 235 yards between him and the flag. He unfortunately lost his second shot right and over the green into the water, leading to another bogey to close out his round.

After posting five birdies and no bogeys in his first 16 holes, Taylor was equally surprised to see the two stumbles coming in but knows it’ll be a tall task to catch Looper on Sunday with the way he’s playing.

“He’s playing very good. He’s not missing a lot. It’s surprising the way he actually finished the way he did today,” Taylor said. “We all know that four shots is not a lot in the grand scheme of things, so I’m just going to keep playing my game and make Ken win the tournament. He’s playing very good, but he is catchable so tomorrow should be a lot of fun.”

Early in the round, Looper didn’t appear catchable. After a successful up-and-down at the first from in front of the green to save par, Looper reeled off three straight birdies, holing a 15-footer at the second and 20-footers at the third and fourth for birdies. Seven straight pars followed, but he again poured in back-to-back birdies at the 12th and 13th.

“It wasn’t that big because they were birdieing too and making birdies on top of me,” Looper said, “but it was pretty nice to make some putts to start. But then I had a dry spell for a little while.”

Although his early start didn’t boost his lead much, he showed himself something Saturday playing in the final group. Three times he’d held the 36-hole lead on PGA TOUR Latinoamerica, and all three times he’d lost the lead in the third round. He didn’t do that Saturday, and he said those three times playing with the lead a year ago on a Saturday taught him a different approach.

“I just tried to keep going this time,” Looper said. “I didn’t try to hang onto the lead. I tried to make the lead bigger, and that’s a pretty big help.”

Finals groups on Sunday, though, are a different animal, and Looper’s never played in one or finished inside the top-25 in 22 prior starts on the Web.com Tour. Still, with the nearest competitor four shots behind, he could post a number that’s nearly impossible to catch if he executes like he has the first three rounds.

“If I just stick to my game plan, I know I’m going to keep shooting under par,” Looper said. “So, at this point, I can still do the same thing tomorrow and make them have to shoot 64 or something ridiculous to catch me and knowing that is pretty comforting.”

Jaeger, who has already won twice this season and three times in his career, knows how difficult it is to finish down the stretch, and he’s hoping he can come out early and put some pressure on Looper.

“Man, it’s finishing a golf tournament. I’ve been there. It’s tough,” Jaeger said. “I don’t care what kind of lead you have. So we’re going to try to make it as tough as possible on him tomorrow. It’s going to take a good round. He’s playing really well.”

For Jaeger, any finish inside the top three would likely vault him back to the top of the Web.com Tour money list, where he resided for a period in May and June, with one event remaining, but he’s not concerned with that. He wants the fully exempt status on the PGA TOUR that comes with finishing at the top of the regular season, but he wants another win more.

“I’m not playing for second,” Jaeger said. “I’m going to play to win tomorrow. If I end up finishing second, that’s a great week, but I want to win again. I’ve got a chance tomorrow, and I’m going to try my best tomorrow to do that.”

Ryan Yip (64), Keith Mitchell (65), Jonathan Hodge (67), and Talor Gooch (68) all sit five shots back of Looper in a tie for fourth at 12-under 201.

Saturday Notes:

* Saturday weather: Sunny, High: 89, Winds: SW 4-8 mph.

* This week’s purse is \$550,000 with \$99,000 going to the champion.

* Through 20 tournaments this season, 12 of the winners have been either the 54-hole leader or co-leader.

* Ryan Yip posted the round of the day with a third-round 7-under 64 to get into T4 entering the final round. Yip is 113th on the money list and needs a big finish to get inside the top 75 and secure fully exempt status on the Web.com Tour next season and a spot in the Web.com Tour Finals.

* Keith Mitchell, who grew up just down the road in Chattanooga, Tenn., jumped into a share of fourth at 12-under 201 after the second best round of the day (65). Mitchell and Jaeger were high school teammates at Baylor School in Chattanooga with PGA TOUR winner Harris English.

* After starting with 12 straight pars, Jonathan Hodge, who was born in Knoxville, birdied four of his last six holes for his third straight 4-under 67 to jump into T4 at 12-under, five back of Looper.

* Justin Lower followed up his season-best 66 in the second round with another 66 in the third round Saturday, jumping up to T8 entering the final round. Lower is in search of his second career top-10 and first since 2014. At No. 174 on the Regular Season money list, Lower needs a high finish to secure entry into the Regular Season finale next week at the WinCo Foods Portland Open.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INTERVIEWS from today’s play are available via the following FTP site:

website: <https://moveit.pgatourhq.com> <<https://moveit.pgatourhq.com/>>

Username: webcom_Highlights

Password: pgatour13

* First click on “FOLDER” on the top left of the main page. From there, navigate to the following folders:
/Home/Highlights and then locate the event folder of your choice.

* All footage is HD and use is free.

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