



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 29, 2017

Contact: Nick Parker
(904) 806-4582

Second-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Sam Saunders	59-66—125 (-17)
2	Julian Etulain	64-63—127 (-15)
T3	Bronson Burgoon	66-63—129 (-13)
T3	Jonathan Byrd	64-65—129 (-13)
T3	Roberto Castro	65-64—129 (-13)

Saunders maintains lead at Web.com Tour Championship despite late double bogey

ATLANTIC BEACH, Fla. – One day removed from posting a 12-under 59 in the first round of the Web.com Tour Championship, Sam Saunders returned to his home course of Atlantic Beach Country Club on Friday morning and continued to pull away from the field in the Web.com Tour's season-ending event. Saunders, who is one of five club members in the field this week, recorded a second-round 66 to reach 17-under 125. He will take a two-shot lead into weekend play at the fourth and final Web.com Tour Finals event.

Saunders opened his week in Atlantic Beach with the seventh round of 59 or better in Web.com Tour history, thanks to 13 birdies on a course he joined earlier this year after moving to the Northeast Florida beach town. Looking towards the second round, where he was paired with good friend and fellow member Steve Wheatcroft, Saunders told Golf Channel it would be a welcoming environment again on Friday.

"I'm playing with my friends out here and this is a great place with a lot of good local people here – all the folks at the club and all of the neighbors watching," he said. "I'm not going to be too stressed, hopefully have fun and shoot a low one tomorrow."

Starting his day in the 8:35 a.m. (ET) grouping off of No. 1, the former Clemson standout parred his opening four holes before converting a 10-foot birdie try on the short par-3 fifth to move into red figures. The downhill birdie putt on the same hole where he converted an unlikely 40-foot putt from off the green on yesterday seemed to ease the early-round nerves.

"It's the fact that you start feeling disappointed with pars. You make good pars on holes that you know are pars, and you have to tell yourself you're fine. It feels like you're playing so bad compared to yesterday," Saunders said after his round. "I parred the first three holes today and I felt like, okay, I'm still playing good golf. It's not time to panic or anything."

Saunders failed to panic after an errant tee shot on the par-5 sixth led to an obstruction ruling due to a sprinkler drip line and in turn a disappointing par, but he quickly made up for it.

Starting on the par-5 seventh, the 30-year-old regained his opening-round form, posting six birdies in a seven-hole stretch to vault to 7-under for the day and an astounding 19-under for the week – tied with the Web.com Tour’s all-time record.

On Thursday, Saunders birdied his final six holes to put his name in golf’s record books.

On Friday, he struggled down the stretch with a par-par-bogey-birdie streak from 14 through 17 before a crushing double-bogey at the last left him with a 66.

Sitting in the middle of the fairway on the par-5 finishing hole, Saunders blocked his second shot right of the green before flubbing his third into a greenside bunker, which wound up plugged in the lip. Two more shots to get out from the hazard gave way to a missed 10-foot bogey try, and the one-time runaway train was brought back to the field.

“I’m not going to let making a bogey out there, or a couple of loose shots that got away (bother me). That happens. Golf is hard. You can’t shoot 59 and expect to shoot 62 and I think, ‘I’m going to go blitz it tomorrow,’” said an open and honest Saunders after his round.

Despite the finish, the married father of two reflected on a 125 tally that kept him atop the leaderboard with 36 holes to play.

“What’s important is the final score after two days, and I would have taken that my whole life,” he said.

Saunders spent the 2016-17 season on the PGA TOUR, where he finished No. 129 in the FedExCup standings after notching seven top-25 finishes, including a season-best T5 at the Puerto Rico Open in March. The 30-year-old recorded three of those top-25s in his last five starts of the season, but still wound up four spots shy of playing his way into the Playoffs.

With a return to the Web.com Tour Finals on the docket to secure his PGA TOUR status, Saunders opened with a T11 at the Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship and a T40 at the Albertsons Boise Open before a missed cut at last week’s DAP Championship left him at No. 24 on the Finals-only money list entering the week.

While Saunders is trending strong towards a return to the PGA TOUR, he’s also trying to capture the tournament title and \$180,000 first-place prize. In 83 prior starts on the Web.com Tour, he has collected 12 top-10 finishes, including a career-best T2 effort at the Utah Championship in 2012.

When asked of his last win on any level, Saunders struggled to come with a finite answer, but knew he was at least trending well in his new hometown.

“It’s been a long time. I haven’t won anything out on the Web or the PGA TOUR. I’ve had some close calls. I lost in a playoff on the PGA TOUR. A couple years ago I had a second in Utah, so it’s been close but I need to get a win. I think the bottom line is I need to win a golf tournament,” he said. “And obviously my goal at this point, being my fourth year on the PGA TOUR, my goal is to win on the PGA TOUR, but this is still a very big stage. These are the best players in the world. These are really, really good players out here. So, if I can win this golf tournament, then that 100 percent proves to me that I can win on the PGA TOUR. More so than losing in a playoff out there.”

FRIDAY NOTES:

* Friday weather: Partly cloudy; High of 88; Wind E/NE 6-13 mph.

* This week’s purse is \$1M with \$180,000 awarded to the champion.

* This is the fourth and final tournament in the Web.com Tour Finals, a series of four events that will conclude this week. Twenty-five PGA TOUR cards were awarded last month following the WinCo Foods Portland Open presented by Kraft Heinz. An additional 25 cards will be issued to the top 25 players on the Finals-only money list on Sunday night, with positioning for all 50 cards set at that time as well.

* 69 players made the 36-hole cut with a score of 5-under 137 or better.

* Through 36 holes, Saunders has recorded 21 birdies. His 13 birdies on Thursday represented the most in a single round in Web.com Tour history, with the six straight birdies to close tying six other players for most birdies to finish a round in history.

* Saunders' 17-under 125 effort marks the lowest opening 36 holes on the Web.com Tour this year (to par), bettering the 16-under mark posted by Aaron Wise (Air Capital Classic) and Kyle Wilshire (Utah Championship).

* Saunders leads the field in putting average (1.379) and putts per round (23.00) through two rounds.

* Prior to this week, Saunders' lone 36-hole lead of his Web.com Tour career came at the 2014 Hotel Fitness Championship, where he opened with rounds of 66-66 for a two-shot lead but finished in T4 after closing with 70-72 on the weekend.

* Only two of the six players to record a 59 or better on the Web.com Tour went on to win that same week – Jason Gore (2005 Cox Classic) and Stephan Jaeger (2016 Ellie Mae Classic).

* Of the nine players to post a sub-60 round in PGA TOUR, only four went on to win that same week – Al Geiberger (1977 Memphis Classic), David Duval (1999 Bob Hope Chrysler Classic), Stuart Appleby (2010 Greenbrier Classic) and Justin Thomas (2017 Sony Open in Hawaii).

* The Web.com Tour Championship field includes five players who are Atlantic Beach Country Club members: Sam Saunders (1), Steve Wheatcroft (T6), Chris Baker (T41), Vince Covello (MC) and Luke Guthrie (MC).

* Nicholas Lindheim, who won the DAP Championship a week ago in a playoff over Chesson Hadley and Rob Oppenheim, could overtake Hadley for No. 1 on the Web.com Tour Finals money list with a win this week depending on Hadley's finish. Lindheim enters the weekend in T6 at 12-under 130. Hadley made the cut as well on the number at 5-under 137.

* Julian Etulain is two shots back in solo second after rounds of 64-63 to open. Etulain made the cut in each of his last two starts but needs at least a top-10 this week to secure his PGA TOUR card.

* Brett Drewitt leads the field in greens in regulation (34/36) with 94.44% through two rounds. Drewitt enters the weekend in T9 at 11-under 131 after hitting 17 of 18 greens in each of the first two rounds.

* Jonathan Byrd, who owns 1154 career PGA TOUR starts, entered the Web.com Tour Championship at No. 66 on the Finals-only money list after missing the cut in each of his last two starts. The former Clemson golfer made his first Web.com Tour Championship start in 2001, didn't appear again until 2014, and has now played three of the last four years.

* Players ranked Nos. 23-30 on the Finals-only money list and where they stand:

Player	Finals \$	Score	Standing
23. Steve Wheatcroft	\$29,025	130 (-12)	T6
24. Sam Saunders	\$27,900	125 (-17)	1
25. Cameron Percy	\$27,855	136 (-6)	T45
26. Zac Blair	\$26,830	138 (-4)	MC
27. Roger Sloan	\$25,495	138 (-4)	MC
28. K.H. Lee	\$24,955	138 (-4)	MC
29. Matt Harmon	\$24,400	131 (-11)	T9
30. John Chin	\$24,193	148 (+6)	MC

* Money earned by the No. 25 player on the Finals-only money list in each of the past four years:

2013: Bobby Gates \$33,650.00

2014: Eric Axley \$36,311.66

2015: Rob Oppenheim \$32,206.00

2016: Tim Wilkinson* \$27,425.00

**denotes three events played (Web.com Tour Championship was cancelled)*

* Scoring Averages at the par-71 Atlantic Beach Country Club:

	Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
R1:	33.865	34.587	68.452	
R2:	33.661	34.992	68.653	68.553

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.

For the latest information and updates on the Web.com Tour visit www.pgatourmedia.com

Scores available at www.pgatour.com or on the Associated Press wire

Follow the Web.com Tour on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/webdotcomtour> on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/WebDotComTour and on Instagram at www.instagram.com/webdotcomtour