



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Ryan Brehm	65 (-6)
2	Scott Langley	67 (-4)
	Brett Drewitt	
4	14 tied at	68 (-3)

Ryan Brehm takes early lead at Web.com Tour's Knoxville Open

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – It's been two years since Michigan native Ryan Brehm last held an 18-hole lead on the Web.com Tour. The 32-year-old has seen just about everything in that four-year span, from winning on the Web.com Tour to competing on the PGA TOUR to ultimately struggling to earn starts on either level. Signs began to point to a change for Brehm on Monday, however, when the Michigan State alum shot an 8-under 64 at the Knoxville Open Monday qualifier to enter a playoff for a spot in this week's field. Brehm was able to advance through the playoff, earning his seventh Web.com Tour start of the year. He rode the momentum into Thursday, carding a 6-under 65 at Fox Den Country Club to take a two-stroke lead over Panama Championship winner Scott Langley

Brehm began the day in Knoxville with four-straight pars before picking up his first birdie of the day on the par-5 fifth. He would pick up five more birdies before walking off the green on No. 16 to the sound of an airhorn suspending play due to inclement weather in the area.

"I was a little hungry, so that [delay] was nice," Brehm joked after his round. "We went back and the greens were just a tick slower. You kind of know they are, but it's hard to adjust right away so I left the first two [putts out there]. The first one was right in the middle and then the second one went a little right just because of the speed."

Despite feeling off at the end, Brehm kept it together, closing out the round with a bogey-free 6-under 65. The round marked his third sub-70 round in 18 total rounds on Tour this year.

"I've been struggling this year," he said of his season. "I've made a few cuts, but I haven't been near the lead since I was on the Web.com Tour a couple of years ago. This year has been a little bit of a struggle to find it, to keep the ball in play. I know I've showed signs of really being strong at times, but then there's the occasional double-bogey or whatever it may be, you know, just kind of a round killer."

Brehm has made six starts on the Web.com Tour this year, making the cut in half. His best finish coming into this week was a T47 at the Country Club de Bogot Championship in February.

It's a stark contrast to 2016, Brehm's last full season on the Web.com Tour. In 24 events that season he notched five top-10 finishes, including a win at the Regular Season-ending WinCo Foods Portland Open presented by Kraft-Heinz. The year's performance was enough to end him at No. 4 on the money list and send him to the PGA TOUR for the first time.

Despite the hurdles he's faced since then, Brehm is far from discouraged. With a strong support system by his side in his wife and caddie Chelsey, he has continued to fight on, confident that the lessons he's learned since 2016 will help him climb back to the top.

"There are a lot of little lessons there, I think," Brehm said. "Being two years older now I think I've learned, even off of the course, things I can incorporate into playing good golf under pressure. Having been [in contention] and gone through the emotions, I know that you're going to think things, you're going to feel things you haven't felt in a while, and you just have to do your best to slow yourself down and make good golf swings. It's really not any different than that."

Just behind Brehm on the leaderboard is Langley, whose bogey-free 4-under 67 put him in prime position to earn his second title of the year this week.

Like Brehm, Langley knows what it's like to return to the Web.com Tour after spending time on the PGA TOUR. Also like Brehm, he understands success comes when you approach the experience as a learning opportunity rather than looking at it as a negative.

"I've learned a lot of good lessons over the course of my last six years as a pro," Langley remarked. "I feel like I'm putting my experience to use... I don't know. I think I've just kind of learned more about my own game, you know, where I can push the envelope and where I can't. Learning more about your own strengths and playing to them a little more."

THURSDAY NOTES:

- * Thursday weather: Mostly sunny with showers in the early afternoon, High 85, Winds W 8-10 mph.
- * This week's purse is \$550,000, with \$99,000 going to the champion.
- * The Knoxville Open is one of the four oldest events on the Web.com Tour's schedule, having been a staple since the Tour's inception in 1990. The other three events in the original rotation include the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper, the Wichita Open and the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco.
- * This year marks the first time since 2000 that the event is being played in May, having been moved up the calendar from its previously scheduled spot in August.
- * Ben Kohles and Dicky Pride, playing partners in the opening round, both sit tied for T4 at 3-under 68. The two have been friends since Kohles turned professional and have stayed together on the road several times throughout the years.
- * Will Claxton posted a 3-under 68 to card his first sub-70 round in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event since 2014. Claxton has been battling a hip injury.
- * Adam Long opened play with a 3-under 68 as he chases his fourth top-10 finish of the 2018 season. Long carded three top-10s in 24 events last season, the most in a single year of his career.
- * The lowest 18-hole score in tournament history sits at 10-under 61, which was carded by both Grayson Murray and Keith Mitchell in 2016. Mitchell's 61 occurred during the first round of the event.
- * Frank Conner holds the lowest start by an eventual tournament champion, opening play with an 8-under 63 in 1991. The highest start by a tournament champion currently sits at even-par 71, which was carded four separate times (Tom Scherrer, 1995; Darron Stiles, 2002; Hunter Haas, 2004; Kim Felton, 2005).
- * The largest 18-hole lead in tournament history occurred in 2007, when Kyle McCarthy held a three-stroke lead after the first round. McCarthy went on to finish runner-up that year.
- * Through 10 events in the 2018 season, only one 18-hole leader has gone on to capture victory at the end of the week (Julian Etulain, Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by NACHER). In tournament history, the round-one leader has gone on to win five times (Frank Conner, 1991; Dave Rummells, 1997; Heath Slocum, 2001; Jarrod Lyle, 2008; Martin Piller, 2014).
- * In 29 years, the Knoxville Open has yet to see a champion go wire-to-wire. The 1997 winner Dave Rummells held the solo-lead after 18 and 36 holes but temporary slipped out of the lead after 72. The last wire-to-wire winner on the Web.com Tour was current PGA TOUR player Aaron Wise, who won the 2017 Wichita Open in wire-to-wire fashion.

* Seth Reeves enters the second round inside of the top 10 for the fifth time this year. Reeves held a share of the opening-round lead at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at the Abaco Club before finishing the week T10.

* A victory for Langley in Knoxville would mark the third title captured by a lefty this year. There has never been three lefty victories in a single season on Tour.

*After Monday qualifying into the Knoxville Open last year, PGA Professional Casey Flenniken is making his second Web.com Tour appearance, competing in this week's field as a sponsor's exemption. The two-time Tennessee PGA Professional of the Year Award winner opened with an even-par 71 and sits T52 heading into Friday.

* This week's field features nine Tennessee residents, five of whom are Knoxville locals (Eric Axley, Jonathan Hodge, Wes Roach, Casey Flenniken and Andrew McCain). Of the Tennesseans, Stephan Jaeger is in the strongest position heading into Friday, sitting at T4 after carding a 3-under 68.

* Fox Den CC Scoring averages:

	Front (35)	Back (36)	Total (71)
R1	35.723	36.006	71.729

* NEXT WEEK: The Web.com Tour travels to Greer, South Carolina, for the BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation.

For highlights from today's round, or any 2018 event visit <http://bit.ly/webcomtour2018>

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