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### **Third-Round Leaderboard**

<b>Pos.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Scores</b>
1	Daniel Summerhays	70-64-67-201 (-12)
	Will Claxton	68-65-68-201 (-12)
3	Wes Roach	71-68-63-202 (-11)
4	Four tied at	(-10)

### **Will Claxton and Daniel Summerhays claim 54-hole lead at Web.com Tour's Knoxville Open**

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Will Claxton came into Knoxville simply hoping for a couple rounds of healthy golf as he begins to ease back into the sport after a four-year break to recover from hip and back ailments. The 36-year-old has far exceeded even his own expectations, carding three sub-70 rounds to put himself atop the leaderboard with Daniel Summerhays heading into Championship Sunday at the Knoxville Open. Claxton and Summerhays both sit at 12-under 201 going into the final round, with Knoxville local Wes Roach one back and a host of players within reach at 10-under 203.

Claxton entered Saturday two shy of the lead after a 6-under 65 in the second round moved him into contention. Despite the temptation to change his game plan and begin playing aggressively, the Auburn University alum knew patience would prove to be key at Fox Den Country Club, a track that is proving to be a test for even the best of players this week.

“Quite honestly I was comfortable all day out there,” he remarked. “It’s not the kind of course, with the conditions being firm, that you can really attack any pin. You’re just trying to hit to a point and hope it ends up close... patience is key. Like I said, it’s a difficult golf course with the firmness of the fairways and greens, so just hit your points and be patient out there.”

The Alabama native was patient all day, carding four birdies and just one bogey on the day to post a third-round 3-under 68. He was seven of seven in scrambling, leading the field, and hit 11 of 14 fairways on the day. The performance was enough to move him atop the leaderboard, but more importantly it was enough to show him that his perseverance and patience over the last four years were worth it.

“Oh, definitely,” he said smiling after being asked whether this week already felt like a win. “I’d like to put another day with it, regardless of score, and just feel healthy and be able to swing. That would be a success for me at this point.”

Tied with Claxton is Summerhays, who entered this week trying to build on his previous momentum from the PGA TOUR. Conditional status has kept the 34-year-old from putting together a full schedule, having only been able to make five starts on TOUR in the 2018 calendar year. The 2017-18 season was proving to be a tough one for Summerhays, who hadn’t placed higher than T55 in eight attempts. Things began to change for him at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans, however, when he and his partner Tony Finau finished T6.

“You know, the Zurich Classic of New Orleans was my fifth tournament this calendar year,” he commented. “It was my ninth start on the PGA TOUR, and I just need reps. I felt like I was playing better, and you just need tournament golf. It doesn’t matter where it is, you just need to hit shots under the pressure. Your body always feels different than just playing at home.”

Like Claxton, Summerhays is no rookie when it comes to professional golf. In 2007, he became the first amateur to win a Web.com Tour title, taking home a victory at the Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship. Three days after winning his maiden title, he chose to forgo his senior season at Brigham Young University and turn professional. Summerhays then spent the next three seasons on the Web.com Tour before finishing at No. 5 on the money list in 2010 to earn his first PGA TOUR card.

The father of four has been playing steady since, having last found himself in the final Sunday pairing at the Memorial Tournament in 2017.

“There’s a lot of things that I’ve learned over my whole career,” he said speaking of what experience he will draw on during Sunday’s round, “you know 10 plus years now. Just everything leading up. What I do tonight, just relaxing. Then tomorrow morning you wake up, you make sure you get a little exercise, get your heartrate going a little bit, kind of get out a little bit of the jitters. And then honestly just looking forward to the challenge. There’s two different types of nervousness – the fearful nervousness of what could happen and the excited nervousness. I think I’ve learned how to tap into that excited nervousness.”

### **SATURDAY NOTES:**

\* Saturday weather: Sunny, High 90, Winds W/SW 6-12 mph.

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

\* The largest 54-hole lead in tournament history belongs to Tim Conley, who entered the final round five strokes clear of the field in 1993. Conley went on to win by seven, the largest margin of victory in the tournament’s 28-year span.

\* Through nine events, five 54-hole leaders/co-leaders have gone on to capture a title (Sungjae Im, Ben Taylor, Julian Etulain, Sam Burns and Eric Axley). In tournament history, 18 third-round leaders/co-leaders have donned the orange champion’s jacket at the end of the week, with the most recent being Martin Piller in 2014.

\* Peter Malnati is the only Tennessean to win the Knoxville Open. Knoxville resident Jonathan Hodge came close, finishing runner up in 2017.

\* Stephan Jaeger, George McNeil and Brady Schnell took the most advantage of moving day, each moving up 26 spots to T8, T25 and T25, respectively.

\* Wes Roach’s 8-under 63 marks his lowest 18-hole score in 18 prior rounds at Fox Den Country Club. The round was one away from tying the career-low 62 he carded at the 2017 Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS.

\* Alabama native Garrett Osborn is playing the weekend in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event for the first time since the 2014 WinCo Foods Portland Open presented by Kraft-Heinz. Osborn has played in nine events since Portland but has failed to make a cut. He sits at 2-under 211 heading into Sunday.

\* Stephan Jaeger is playing this week after not making it into the field at THE PLAYERS Championship. Jaeger, a Chattanooga, Tennessee, resident, has been making the hour commute to and from his home each day. He finished T7 at this event last year, and a third-round 7-under 64 has him sitting T8 moving into the final round.

\*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, and made his first cut after a second-round 1-under 70. Flenniken carded an even-par 71 in the third round to enter Sunday at 1-under 212 (T55).

\* This week’s field featured nine Tennessee residents, five of whom are Knoxville locals (Eric Axley, Jonathan Hodge, Wes Roach, Casey Flenniken and Andrew McCain). Of the Tennesseans, three made the cut, with Wes Roach in the best position heading into Sunday. Roach sits at 11-under 202, solo-third.

\* Fox Den CC Scoring averages:

	Front (35)	Back (36)	Total (71)
R1	35.723	36.006	71.729
R2	35.503	35.183	70.686
R3	34.847	35.181	70.028

\* 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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