



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Final Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Eric Axley	71-65-68-204 (-12)
2	Willy Wilcox	72-71-64-207 (-9)
	Sebastian Munoz	67-71-69-207 (-9)
	K.H. Lee	69-66-72-207 (-9)

Eric Axley wins rain-shortened North Mississippi Classic

OXFORD, Miss. – It was a gloomy, rain-soaked Sunday in Oxford, Mississippi, but for Tennessee native Eric Axley it was a birthday better than anything he could have asked for. Axley, who took the outright 54-hole lead at the North Mississippi Classic on Saturday, was declared the inaugural tournament champion after Tour officials were forced to cancel the final round due to heavy rains that led the course to become unplayable. The 44-year-old ended the week at 12-under 204, three strokes ahead of Willy Wilcox, Sebastian Munoz and K.H. Lee.

“It feels good,” Axley said of his first win since the 2006 Valero Texas Open. “It’s been a while since I won on this level, and it always feels good to win.”

After opening tournament play with a 1-under 71, Axley moved into contention at The Country Club of Oxford with a 7-under 65, a bogey-free round in which he birdied five holes in a seven-hole stretch. The performance was enough to move Axley within one of the lead heading into the third round. Having looked at the forecast for Sunday and knowing that a rain-shortened event was a possibility, Axley went out Saturday aiming to play as if the round were his last.

“We looked at the forecast and knew they had moved [final-round] tee times up,” Axley recalled, “and this isn’t our first rodeo so we thought that there may be a chance that we didn’t play today. Our goal yesterday was to play like it was the final round and we went out and played well, and it ends up it was the final round, so we got the win.”

Axley made 22 starts on the Web.com Tour in 2017, making 11 cuts and carding one top-10 finish. The performance was enough to land him a spot in the Web.com Tour Finals, but missed cuts in three of the four Finals events left the former East Tennessee State Buccaneer at No. 59 on the Finals money list come season’s end. Though Axley has been back and forth on the Web.com Tour and PGA TOUR over the last few years, he’s never wavered in his ability to compete and make a living via professional golf.

“You always want to play at the highest level and compete at the highest level,” he said. “You’ll have your ups and downs and your injuries and stuff like that, but if I didn’t play golf I really don’t know what else I would do.”

Rain began falling in Oxford during the early-morning hours Sunday and after play was suspended at 10:39 a.m., players waited around the clubhouse and range in anticipation of news about resumption. The uncertainty was cleared up at 2:40 p.m. when Tour officials deemed the course unplayable and congratulated Axley on his victory – his second professional win in the state of Mississippi (2003 Capitol City Open, NGA Hooters Tour).

“Like yesterday, I was assuming we were going to play,” Axley said of the holding pattern, “so I was trying to stay in the mindset that we were going to play. Then it just kind of started looking like we weren’t, so it turned into a guessing game – do we get ready to play or do we start relaxing? It was a little bit hectic even though we didn’t do a lot today.”

The victory came with a \$99,000 payday, moving Axley up 38 spots on the Regular Season money list to No. 7.

“This check will probably be the best [birthday present] I’ve gotten,” Axley joked.

SUNDAY NOTES:

- * Sunday weather: Rainy, High 70, Winds SE 7-14 with gusts around 20 mph.
- * This week’s purse was \$550,000, with \$99,000 going to the champion.
- * Axley became the second left-handed player to win on Tour this season, with fellow lefty Scott Langley winning the Panama Championship in January.
- * At 44 years exactly, Axley becomes the oldest winner on Tour in 2018. Prior to his win this week, each winner was 28 or younger at the time of his victory.
- * With his win, Axley snapped the streak of first-time Tour winners, with the previous seven winners having won their maiden title in 2018. Axley’s first win on Tour came 14 years ago at the 2005 Rex Hospital Open.
- * The North Mississippi Classic became the first 54-hole event on Tour since the 2017 BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation. The Greenville, South Carolina, event was cancelled due to heavy rain and thunderstorms in the area.
- * Willy Wilcox’s T2 finish marked his second top-10 of the season. The performance was enough to move the Alabama native up from No. 41 to No. 19 on the Regular Season money list.
- * Michael Hebert ended the week at 8-under 208, good for a T5 finish. It marked his first top-10 finish on Tour since the 2015 United Leasing & Finance Championship.
- * Monday qualifiers Alex Higgs (T22) and Johnny Ruiz (T10) both finished inside of the top 25, earning them a spot in next week’s United Leasing & Finance Championship field. After opening play with a 3-over 75, Ole Miss standout Braden Thornberry finished the week T22, also earning a spot in next week’s event.
- * C.C. of Oxford scoring averages:

	Front (36)	Back (36)	Total (72)
R1	37.484	36.123	73.606
R2	35.770	36.184	71.954
R3	35.451	36.338	71.789

* NEXT WEEK: The Web.com Tour heads to Evansville, Indiana, for the United Leasing & Finance Championship, contested at Victoria National Golf Club. The 2017 Tournament of the Year will be followed by an off-week.

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

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