



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 1, 2017**

**Contact: Alex Wood**  
**(850) 691-6756**

#### **First-Round Leaderboard**

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Michael Johnson	64 (-6)
	Nelson Ledesma	
3	Five tied at	66 (-4)

### **Michael Johnson and Nelson Ledesma sit atop leaderboard after opening round of Panama Championship**

PANAMA CITY, Panama – Just a week after proposing to his girlfriend on the shores of The Bahamas, University of Auburn alum Michael Johnson carded seven birdies at Club de Golf de Panamá to take a share of the Panama Championship lead with Argentinian Nelson Ledesma at 6-under 64 before play was suspended due to darkness. Johnson sat at 2-under as he made the turn in Panama but quickly caught fire with a three-hole birdie streak on Nos. 10-12. The 24-year-old rode the momentum of the streak into the closing hole, where he picked up his final birdie of the day after his shot from the rough lipped-out for eagle.

The second-year Web.com Tour member is no stranger to success in Panama. In 2017, Johnson opened play in Panama City with a 4-under 66 to make his first cut on Tour. Though he went on to finish the week at T36, Johnson believes the experience will help him heading into the weekend this year as he looks to continue building on Thursday's performance.

"[It's important] to play steady. Be patient," Johnson said. "It gets hard out here. Some of the front pins are hard to get to and it's pretty firm, so par isn't a terrible score. You just have to stay away from the bogeys and make some birdies."

Johnson held the first-round co-lead once during the 2017 Web.com Tour Season, in Springfield, Illinois, at the Lincoln Land Charity Championship. His playing partner for that round was Tour veteran Scott Langley. Langley and Johnson were paired together for Thursday's round, the first time the duo had played together since Illinois.

"I need to play more with Scott," Johnson joked as he finished the round.

Joining Johnson atop the leaderboard is 27-year-old Nelson Ledesma, who is making his Web.com Tour debut after finishing No. 5 on the PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Order of Merit in 2017. Ledesma carded a bogey-free opening round to take a two-shot lead over fellow Argentinian Julian Etulain. Ledesma recorded eight top-25 finishes on PGA TOUR LA last season, including a win at the 86 Abierto OSDE del Centro presentado por FiberCorp. With no guaranteed starts to begin the 2018 Web.com Tour Season and the first reshuffle taking place after next week's Club Colombia Championship, he knows this week holds extra importance.

"I started so calm and that was the key to my performance," Ledesma stated. "I never expected to shoot 6-under, but I feel great. This is my first event of the season and I need to take advantage of it. I want to get better status after the first reshuffle."

## **THURSDAY NOTES:**

- \* Thursday weather: Partly Cloudy, High: 91, Winds: NE 15-20 mph.
- \* This week's purse is \$625,000, with \$112,500 going to the champion.
- \* Round 1 play was suspended at 6:45 PM due to darkness and will resume Friday at 7:45 AM. Round 2 tee times will remain as originally scheduled.
- \* University of California, Berkeley alum Max Homa opened play with a 2-under 68. The California native carded T7 and T19 finishes in his first two events of 2018, the best start of his six seasons on Tour. The 27-year-old made just two cuts on the PGA TOUR in 2017 but credits this start to a change in mentality: "You have to chalk it up to just a really bad year, try and put it in the background, and start playing some really good golf again."
- \* Stanford University alum Joseph Bramlett made his first Web.com Tour start in nearly two years after being sidelined with an injury. The 29-year-old carded two birdies but struggled to an opening-round, 3-over 73. Scott Pinckney also made a return to the Tour after injury kept him out for almost a year. The Utah native opened with a 1-over 71.
- \* Omar Tejeira, the sole Panamanian in this week's field, earned a spot in his hometown event through an open qualifier in Panama. This is the 27-year-old's third time competing in the Panama Championship, though he has never made it to weekend play. The St. Thomas University alum began the week with a 3-over 73.
- \* Carlos Ortiz and Ryan Armour currently hold the tournament record for highest opening-round by a champion at even-par 70.
- \* Julian Etulain has former player and current PGA Tour Latinoamérica rules official Jose Garrido on the bag for him this week in Panama. Etulain opened with a 4-under 66 with his longtime friend as caddie.
- \* NEXT WEEK: The Web.com Tour travels to Bogota Country Club in Bogota, Colombia, for the Club Colombia Championship. The eighth-year event will be followed by two off weeks.

***For the latest information and updates on the Web.com Tour visit [www.pgatourmedia.com](http://www.pgatourmedia.com)***

***Scores available at [www.pgatour.com](http://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](http://www.Facebook.com/WebDotComTour) and on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/webdotcomtour](http://www.instagram.com/webdotcomtour)***