



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 27, 2018

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Second-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Maverick McNealy	64-73-137 (-7)
2	Chris Thompson	72-66-138 (-6)
	Ethan Tracy	70-68-138 (-6)
4	Wyndham Clark	70-69-139 (-5)
	Matt Harmon	68-71-139 (-5)

Maverick McNealy maintains lead by one at Web.com Tour's United Leasing & Finance Championship

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – After his opening-round 8-under 64 Thursday at Victoria National, Stanford University alum Maverick McNealy mentioned that everything in his round had seemed to break his way, bringing with it a three-stroke lead that almost came “easily.”

Easy was far from what the 22-year-old used to describe his second round at the United Leasing & Finance Championship, battling the Fazio-designed course to finish the day at 1-over 73, good for a 7-under 137 36-hole total and a one-stroke lead heading into the weekend. Chris Thompson and Ethan Tracy sit in second, with Wyndham Clark and Matt Harmon falling in behind them.

The 2017 Ben Hogan award winner followed up an opening par with a bogey at the par-4 second but remained calm despite the start, picking up consecutive birdies on Nos. 4 and 5. McNealy would bogey twice more before making the turn, finishing his front nine at 1-over 37.

“I think the conditions were tougher,” the California native remarked. “The greens were a little firmer and faster, and the wind was definitely up. Yesterday it felt like a lot of things went right and a lot of things came easily and to be expected, things didn’t come quite as easily today but I was really happy that I kept the ball in places I could play from and I had a fighting chance at par on every hole... I’m really happy with the way I hung in today.”

Hang in is exactly what McNealy managed to do Friday, picking up two more birdies to offset two additional bogeys on the back nine. The performance gave McNealy an early clubhouse lead – a lead that no one else was able to eclipse, despite their best efforts.

Since it entered the Web.com Tour’s rotation, Victoria National Golf Club has consistently been one of the toughest tracks on the schedule, ranking second-highest in scoring average in 2017 and highest in 2016 and 2015. Past experience at the course has proven to be an asset, with the last two champions having played the tournament at least once prior to the year of their victory (D.H. Lee, 2017; Seamus Power, 2016). McNealy, who is in his rookie season on Tour and less than a year off of his college graduation, doesn’t see his lack of experience as a hinderance, though.

“It’s funny,” McNealy laughed, “I feel like I’ve been the youngest everywhere I go. My team back at Stanford always made these ‘Mav is young’ jokes because I was kind of a year early. I started college when I was 17.... But I enjoy playing with older guys, and I learned my freshman year of college that I would much rather be the worst player on a

great team than the best player on a poor team because there's so much more you can learn. I love learning from guys with experience and picking up bits and pieces here and there. It makes me better."

McNealy has been learning from everything his rookie season, working to improve every facet of his game as he goes. After failing to convert the 18-hole lead in his first Tour event at the El Bosque Mexico Championship by Innova, the Las Vegas resident has carded finishes of T48-T36-T39-T33 to enter Indiana at No. 103 on the Regular Season money list.

McNealy spent his break before last week's North Mississippi Classic improving his game even farther, a change that could translate into a huge payoff this week in Evansville.

"After Mexico," he commented, "my swing coach and I started thinking more about the golf swing as a whole as opposed to positions and trying to manage things and that posture – really just getting back to basics – has helped me a lot with my golf swing and my putting has felt really good as of late and I've been making no shortage of birdies so it's just a combination of little things that I've been getting better every week."

One stroke back of McNealy awaits Kansas University alum Chris Thompson and former Web.com Tour winner Ethan Tracy. Thompson, who is in his first year of guaranteed status on Tour, tied the round of the day with a 6-under 66 to jump 23 spots heading into the weekend.

Thompson notched his first top-10 finish of the 2018 Tour Season at the Panama Championship, where he tied his career-best performance with a T7. Like Victoria National GC, the Panama Championship proved to be a tough track for Tour members, with Scott Langley taking home the trophy with a 7-under 273.

"I feel like my whole career I've been better when 1- or 2-under is a good score and not 5- or 6-under," the 41-year-old said. "I don't know what it is. I can use my short game out here, which I like, and you have to drive the ball well out here, and I feel like those are my two strengths. I've done those well so far, so hopefully we can keep it rolling these last two days."

Finishing the 2017 Web.com Tour Qualifying School at T16 has allowed Thompson to play with a sense of freedom this season – freedom that could boost him towards his first win on Tour.

"When you can set a schedule, it keeps mama happy at home but you can also get a routine for the week," he said of this season. "You can come in Monday, get a practice round in maybe Tuesday or play in the pro-am on Wednesday – it just sets the routine for the week and I think it puts you in a good rhythm. It's so much easier travel wise. It's a little thing, but little things like that help."

FRIDAY NOTES:

- * Friday weather: Mostly Sunny, High 71, Winds W/NW 8-16 mph.
- * This week's purse is \$600,000, with \$108,000 going to the champion.
- * The cut came at 3-over-par 145, with 68 players advancing to the weekend.
- * Two second-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win during the 2018 season, most recently Julian Etulain at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by NACHER.
- * In the six-year history of the United Leasing & Finance Championship no second-round leader has parlayed that position into a win.
- * Last year, Kyle Thompson held the 36-hole lead at 4-under 140, one stroke clear in front of Austin Cook, Jason Gore, Scott Gutschewski and eventual champion D.H. Lee.
- * Ethan Tracy entered the weekend of the 2017 Country Club de Bogotá Championship four off the lead and carded 68-65 to force extra holes. After holing out from the fairway for eagle to tie Roberto Diaz in regulation, Tracy then birdied the first extra hole to earn his maiden Web.com Tour win. Tracy has played in 13 PGA TOUR events and has made six cuts. He is currently No. 188 in the FedExCup standings.
- * Wyndham Clark carded a second-round 3-under 69 and is two back heading into the weekend. Clark entered the week No. 48 on the money list after making three cuts in seven starts. His best showing came at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club (T4). Clark is coming off a T17 at the rain-shortened North Mississippi Classic.

* Victoria National GC Scoring averages:

	Front (36)	Back (36)	Total (72)
R1	37.284	37.200	74.484
R2	37.538	36.780	74.318

* NEXT WEEK: The Web.com Tour takes a week off before heading to Fox Den CC in Knoxville, Tennessee, for the Knoxville Open.

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

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