



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Third-Round Leaderboard**

| <b>Pos.</b> | <b>Name</b>             | <b>Scores</b>     |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1           | Maverick McNealy        | 64-73-74—211 (-5) |
| 2           | Jose de Jesus Rodriguez | 69-73-70—212 (-4) |
|             | Ethan Tracy             | 70-68-74—212 (-4) |
| 4           | Taylor Moore            | 72-70-71—213 (-3) |
|             | Chris Thompson          | 72-66-75—213 (-3) |

### **Maverick McNealy survives blustery conditions, maintains one-stroke lead at United Leasing & Finance Championship**

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – Maverick McNealy’s third round at the United Leasing & Finance Championship was filled with magic and mayhem. The Stanford, California resident was resilient in adverse conditions, navigating the Fazio design in 3-over-par 74, good for a one-stroke lead over Mexico’s Jose de Jesus Rodriguez and Ethan Tracy.

Taylor Moore and Chris Thompson are lurking, just two off McNealy’s pace with 18 holes to go.

“I’m very happy with the way I played today,” said McNealy. “There’s not many places where that would be the case.”

McNealy battled on Saturday as winds gusted in excess of 25 miles per hour. He fought errant swings, bad breaks and mother nature. The oldest of four made birdies at four, eight and 13. He also made bogeys at five, nine and 18. The up and downs of the round didn’t faze him, not even the costly double-bogey on the par-4 17<sup>th</sup> where McNealy thought he hit a perfect drive.

“Every shot has been a grind this week but today especially,” he said. “It’s a difficult finishing stretch. I made a six on 17 and I felt like I hit six quality shots. It’s really challenging, and I think the scores reflected that, but it’s fun.”

“I think if I played 17 the way I played it four times, I would play it a half shot over par on average,” McNealy continued. “It’s one of those things where I thought I hit that 3-wood dead center and I thought I hit a good iron. That’s why the course is so challenging.”

The third-round scoring average at Victoria National GC was 75.897. The course has provided a strenuous test during the third round, but like he’s done so many times in the classroom, McNealy aced it with flying colors. His par saves on 14 and 15 were marvelous given the spots he placed himself.

A wandering tee shot on 14 forced him to lay up to 220 yards. McNealy knocked his approach to two feet and tapped in for par. On 15, his drive went left and clipped some trees. Stuck in a ditch, he advanced the ball up the fairway and wedged his third to 25 feet. He then drained the par putt and celebrated with a fist pump.

“That was a good little stretch to keep me in this golf tournament,” said McNealy. “I know that every save early is one more buffer for something to happen like it did on 17. That would’ve been a lot costlier if I had not converted those pars.”

McNealy enters the final round with the first 54-hole lead of his young professional career. On the course, the 2015 Haskins Award winner appears stoic. Every move he makes is calculated, even his nutrition is regimented in the heat of competition. It appears that it will take more than seeing his name on the top of the leaderboard to rattle the Las Vegas resident.

“Tomorrow is another round of golf,” he said. “That’s all I’m thinking about. I’ve played a lot of golf and I’ve practiced golf a lot. Also, I’ve worked really hard at golf so I’m excited. I’d be a little more nervous if it was water skiing or something like that.”

McNealy was in a jovial mood after the round and even shared a story about his first time qualifying for a college tournament his freshman year at Stanford.

“We had a 9:30 a.m. tee time at Stanford. I went straight to the trash can and deposited my breakfast down there,” he said. “I shot 71 so it was alright. Some of my best rounds have come when I woke up early nervous because I couldn’t sleep. I’m excited, I think it’s a privilege to play with nerves and I can’t wait.”

McNealy is quickly earning the respect of his peers out on the Web.com Tour. Coming out of the scoring tent, the 2017 Ben Hogan award winner was greeted by fellow Tour rookie Jimmy Stanger, who followed McNealy for the majority of the round. Stanger wished McNealy luck in the final round, assuring him he had all the makings of a champion.

Having started the week No. 103 on the Regular Season money list, a win on Sunday would move McNealy into the top 12, one step closer to earning his PGA TOUR card.

“It’s going to be a fun day tomorrow,” he said. “I’m excited for the challenge. There are a lot of guys playing good golf right behind me. Hopefully it all comes together.”

#### **SATURAY NOTES:**

\* Saturday weather: Partly cloudy, High 61, Winds N 8-16 mph with gusts 20-25 mph.

\* This week’s purse is \$600,000, with \$108,000 going to the champion.

\* The 54-hole leader/co-leader has converted their lead into a victory four times this season (not including the rain-shortened North Mississippi Classic). In the six previous iterations of this event, the 54-hole leader has only gone on to win twice (Smylie Kaufman, 2015; D.H. Lee, 2017).

\* Smylie Kaufman holds the tournament record for largest 54-hole lead, entering the final round with a four-stroke lead in 2015. Through eight events in the 2018 season, the largest 54-hole lead stands at 5 strokes, held by Julian Etulain at the Savannah Golf Championship.

\* The last wire-to-wire winner on the Web.com Tour was Aaron Wise, who won The Wichita Open by five strokes. The United Leasing & Finance Championship has yet to have winner go wire-to-wire.

\* Maverick McNealy leads the Tour in birdie average, carding an average of five per round (Tour average is 3.58). Through three rounds in Evansville, McNealy has tallied 15 birdies, with three coming in his third round.

\* Jose de Jesus Rodriguez enters Sunday just one back of the lead for the first time in his Tour career. Prior to this week, his best position following the third round was T4, which he held at the 2011 El Bosque Mexico Championship by Innova and the 2014 Nova Scotia Open. Rodriguez finished the events at T11 and T7, respectively.

\* Ethan Tracy’s maiden victory on Tour came at the 2017 Country Club de Bogotá Championship after entering the final round T8, four strokes back of the lead. Tracy posted a final round 6-under 65 to force a playoff with Roberto Diaz. This is Tracy’s best position leading into Sunday.

\* Sunday’s final group will be comprised of McNealy, Rodriguez and Tracy, none of whom have played in the final group on Sunday before.

\* Only two winners this season have captured a title despite not being in the final group on Sunday: Adam Svensson (second-to-last), Scott Langley (fourth-to-last).

\* Scott Langley sits three back of the lead at 2-under 214. Langley captured the Panama Championship earlier this season, overcoming a six-stroke deficit during the final round.

\* The largest come-from-behind victory in tournament history occurred in 2014 when Englishman Greg Owen won after entering the day seven back of the lead. Twenty players currently sit within seven of the lead.

\* Seven of the eight winners this season were first-time victors. Seven players inside of the top 10 are seeking their first title.

\* Only four players ended the tournament under par in 2017: D.H Lee (-6), Jason Gore (-5), Roberto Diaz and Scott Langley (-1). Eleven players ended Saturday's round under par.

\* The closing hole at Victoria National GC proved especially hard for the field during the third round, with zero birdies, 24 bogeys, 11 double bogeys and two higher scores.

\* 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     |
| R3 | 37.809     | 38.088    | 75.897     |

\* 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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