**Saxon leads Sluman as Haikou Championship reduced to 54 holes**

HAIKOU, China—Three-time PGA TOUR Series-China winner Charlie Saxon carded a 1-under 71 to move to 7-under, and he takes a one-shot lead after the weather-delayed second round at the Haikou Championship finished Saturday afternoon.

With the start of the third round postponed due to lightning, officials reduced the event at Sunac Haikou 3KM Golf to 54 holes. The final round is scheduled to start at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Fellow American Trevor Sluman also shot a 71 and moved to 6-under as he seeks his first win on the Tour, having earned his card at the first International Qualifying Tournament in February.

England’s Stephen Lewton, who played 34 holes on Friday and Korea’s Todd Baek, who played 35, shared the clubhouse lead at 5-under Friday night and are tied for third heading into the final round.

Saxon led by one after his bogey-free opening 66. His second round, featuring four birdies and three bogeys, was enough to maintain a one-shot lead.

“Today was scrappy, but that happens in golf. You’re not going to play perfect every time, so I was happy to still post a decent round,” said Saxon, who won twice in 2016 as he finished second in the Order of Merit. Saxon is also no stranger to tournaments reduced to 54 holes. A year ago on PGA TOUR Latinoamerica, Saxon won the scheduled 54-hole Lexus Peru Open that concluded Saturday because of a nationwide census held Sunday that prevented the scheduled 72-hole tournament.

The 25-year-old Saxon is currently second on the Order of Merit after winning last week’s Changsha Championship, so will be bidding for back-to-back titles when he tees off at 8.50 a.m. alongside Sluman and Lewton.

“I am excited. It’s a good thing for me. I’ve got a one-shot lead going into the final round so it’s just going to be who’s best after 18 holes. It’s going to be a shootout.”

Sluman, 24, thinks playing with Saxon will be an advantage as he hopes to deny his good friend and secure a breakthrough win on the Tour.

“I think it’s helpful being in the final group, and with Charlie playing so well lately, I know that if I can keep up with him, I’m going to be in really good shape. It’s just a dog race at this point,” said Sluman, who is used to Hainan’s tropical heat after moving to Florida several years ago.

“My wedges have been good. I’m sticking a lot of shots in there close and making a lot of putts, so I just need to make them again tomorrow. But there’s so many people bunched up in there, it’s going to take a low round regardless.”

Lewton, who had full European Tour status in 2011, will hope to put in another good performance despite not playing a single hole Saturday.

“I didn’t play, but I’m playing really good so hopefully I’ll play well again on Sunday. The course is very penal off the tee, so my goal is to just hit as many fairways and greens as possible.”