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Second-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Vince Covello	63-67—130 (-12)
	Xinjun Zhang	66-64—130 (-12)
3	Justin Lower	68-63—131 (-11)
	Greg Yates	64-67—131 (-11)
	Ben Kohles	66-65—131 (-11)
	Jamie Arnold	68-63—131 (-11)

Vince Covello and Xinjun Zhang share lead at Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS

BROUSSARD, Louisiana – Vince Covello and Xinjun Zhang each finished the second round at 12-under 130 to share the 36-hole lead at the halfway point of the Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS. The duo holds a one-shot lead over four players at Le Triomphe Golf & Country Club.

Covello, the first-round leader, followed up a 63 on Thursday with six birdies against two bogeys on Friday for a 4-under 67.

“I’ve been hitting the ball really nicely,” said Covello, a University of North Florida alum. “If you hit greens in regulation around here and you’re putting for birdies, then it makes life easy for you. I haven’t had a whole lot of stressful putts.”

The 36-year-old has done just that, hitting 33 out of 36 greens in regulation to lead the field. Covello birdied two of his last three holes to reach 12-under.

“Yesterday I made a putt on 18 to have the lead and I thought that might be the case again today on nine, so I just rolled it in there,” said Covello. “It’s definitely tough to back up a low number but doing it in the first round, I knew there was still a whole lot of golf to play. You have to keep your head down.”

In 79 career events, Covello has two top-10 finishes including a T3 at the 2017 Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae. This year, he earned a T11 finish in his only made cut of the season at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club.

After making the turn during the first round at even-par, Zhang turned on the jets over the next 27 holes to the tune of 10 birdies and an eagle over 27 holes. The 31-year-old earned a 5-under 66 on Thursday before a 7-under 64 mark on Friday.

“The main thing for me this week has been staying patient out there,” said Zhang. “I didn’t have a very hot start yesterday, made the turn at even-par, but I’ve played really well since. Today I didn’t start great either, missed a couple of opportunities, but I kept a good mental state and let the birdies come.”



In his only previous start at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open, Zhang finished runner-up in 2017 at 18-under 266. Zhang, who had a runner-up finish at the Panamá Championship earlier this year, credited the eagle at the par-5 fifth as jumpstarting his second round.

"I had a really good drive up the left-hand side, somewhere in the 350-yard range, and only had about 220 yards to the pin," said Zhang. "With a wind a little into me and from the left, it was a perfect 4-iron to about 15 feet and made the putt."

With the made cut, Zhang has now made five of six cuts this season. Originally from Shanxi, China, Zhang became the first Chinese player to graduate from the Web.com Tour to the PGA TOUR in 2017 (along with Marty Dou).

Four players sit one stroke back at T3 entering the weekend: Justin Lower (68-63), Greg Yates (64-67), Ben Kohles (66-65) and Jamie Arnold (68-63). The cut was made at 2-under 140 with 77 professionals making the cut.

FRIDAY NOTES:

* Friday's weather: Sunny, high of 75, winds S/SE at 4-8 miles per hour.

* After 36 holes, 77 professionals made the cut, which was set at 2-under 140. Zach Edmondson (T16, 7-under) and Jacob Bergeron (T51, 3-under) each made the cut in their Web.com Tour debuts. Bergeron, who competed at LSU last year as a freshman, is three days shy of his 21st birthday.

* Fan favorite and three-time PGA TOUR champion Boo Weekley carded an 8-under 63 to sit T7 (10-under) after the second round. Weekley holed out for eagle at the par-4 17th from 104 yards out. The round was Weekley's best (in relation to par) since an 8-under 62 in the second round of the 2016 AT&T Byron Nelson on the PGA TOUR.

* Doug Ghim, a rookie on the Web.com Tour and the low amateur at last year's Masters Tournament, followed up a lackluster first round with an 8-under 63 in the second round to reach 7-under for the tournament (T16). Ghim was 10-under through 15 holes on Friday before a late double bogey at the par-5 seventh.

* Justin Lower is T3 (11-under) behind the strength of a second-round 63. Last week, while the Web.com Tour was off, Lower competed in an All-Pro Tour event and won at 26-under.

* All three past champions in the field made the cut. Edward Loar (2013) is 5-under (T35), Fabián Gómez (2010) is 9-under (T11) and Casey Wittenberg (2012, 2017) is 10-under (T7). Wittenberg's 24-under 260 in 2012 stands as a tournament record (tied with two others).

* None of the 36-hole leaders/co-leaders in the first five events of the season have gone on to win the tournament. In 2018, eight of the 27 champions led or co-led after the second round.

* Entering Thursday as the first alternate, Lee Hodges earned entry after a late withdrawal by Wes Roach. Hodges took advantage with a two-day total of 3-under 139 to sit T51.

* This week's purse is \$550,000, with \$99,000 going to the champion. The champion will also earn 500 points in the Web.com Tour points system.

* Forty-two former Web.com Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 56 victories, as well as 12 PGA TOUR champions (equaling 30 victories).



* The par-4 13th hole (513 yards), nicknamed "Gator's Jaw," ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Friday with a scoring average of 4.257.

* The par-5 fifth hole (560 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Friday. The hole played to an average of 4.486 and yielded two eagles and 76 birdies to the 144-player field.

* Le Triomphe Golf & Country Club Scoring Averages:

	Front (36)	Back (35)	Total (71)	Cumulative
R1	34.826	35.528	70.354	
R1	34.903	34.792	69.694	70.024

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