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### Third-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Matthew NeSmith	63-63-69—195 (-15)
2	Brandon Crick	67-67-62—196 (-14)
	Zac Blair	66-65-66—196 (-14)
	Maverick McNealy	65-63-68—196 (-14)

### Matt NeSmith claims 54-hole lead at Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae

**Hayward, Calif.** — Second-round leader Matt NeSmith carded a 1-under 69 on Saturday to maintain a one-stroke lead over three players after the third round at the Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae. NeSmith played 30 holes on Saturday after his second round was suspended due to darkness through six holes on Friday evening.

“A lead is all I can ask for after the way I played my last six holes out there today,” said NeSmith, who carded three bogeys over his final six holes. “I’m just happy to have a chance going into tomorrow. Thirty holes today was a lot, especially on this hilly golf course, but it is what it is and I’m happy to be in this position.”

The pole position entering the final round is one that NeSmith is familiar with, though not on the Korn Ferry Tour. Prior to this tournament, his highest career position entering the final round was T9.

“The last time I was in this position was probably mini-tour golf,” said NeSmith, who sits at 15-under total. “I’ve had some good finishes this year, but they were all coming from behind the pack on Saturday and Sunday. I’ve been in this position before in junior golf, college golf, the whole shebang. It’s just taken me a little bit of time to adjust to every level of golf, but this is where you want to be. You want to be the last group off with nobody on the range when you leave it.”

NeSmith, a University of South Carolina alum, won four times in college but has yet to break through on the Korn Ferry Tour. His highest career finish came in May at the Nashville Golf Open Benefitting the Snedeker Foundation (T6).

At 54<sup>th</sup> in the season-long points standings, NeSmith has already locked up full status on the Korn Ferry Tour for the 2020 season. But being in contention entering the final round has allowed NeSmith to recalibrate his goal: to earn his first PGA TOUR card with a win.

“It would be awesome to win and reach the PGA TOUR; it’s what everybody dreams about,” said NeSmith. “It’s what all of those practice hours add up to. It’s what Q-School was all about through those years. It’s what everyone out here works for, just to go out and have a chance. It would be awesome to just live the dream.”

The 25-year-old ranks in the top 10 this week in both driving accuracy (T8) and greens in regulation (T5). The first round he had led in his Korn Ferry Tour career came on Saturday morning upon the completion of the third round. Even without being in contention this year, NeSmith drew inspiration from the success of his peers.

“I hit balls on Sunday in Omaha two weeks ago [after missing the cut] and I got there right as Kristoffer and all of those guys were going off,” said NeSmith. “I remember that feeling, it’s calming. I know how

to deal with it. I'm just happy to be able to stand on that tee tomorrow with a one-shot lead and go fight it out."

NeSmith will be chased on Sunday by a trio of players one shot back who are also seeking their first win on the Korn Ferry Tour: Brandon Crick, Zac Blair and Maverick McNealy. Crick carded the round of the day on Saturday with an 8-under 62. NeSmith, Blair and McNealy would each earn their PGA TOUR card with a win, while Crick would put himself near the bubble entering next week's season-ending event.

Final-round tee times will run in twosomes on Sunday from 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. off of the first tee.

**SATURDAY NOTES:**

- \* Saturday's weather: Sunny with a high of 80. Winds W/SW at 6-12 miles per hour. The second round resumed at 7:30 a.m. The third round ran from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. off of the first and 10<sup>th</sup> tees.
- \* The cutline fell at 2-under 138 with 66 professionals advancing to the final two rounds. The cutline moved from 1-under to 2-under just before play finished, narrowly avoiding the largest cut in the Tour's history. Eighty-nine players finished at 1-under or better, which would have set a new high (86 players made the cut at the 2015 Price Cutter Charity Championship).
- \* Ten of 21 third-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win the tournament this season (one event was shortened to 54 holes). In 2018, Trevor Cone carried a one-stroke lead into the final round before carding a final-round 64 for a four-stroke victory.
- \* Brandon Crick (-14, T2) holed out for eagle at the first hole (par-4, 397 yards) before going on to shoot the round of the day at 8-under 62. The 62 is the lowest round of his Korn Ferry Tour career, two strokes lower than a pair of 64s he carded in 2018.
- \* Brandon Wu (-6, T33), a recent graduate at Stanford University, is competing this week on a sponsor's exemption as an amateur. Wu competed in both the U.S. Open and The Open Championship this summer, making the cut at the U.S. Open and finishing T35. He also led Stanford to a national championship in May. McNealy (T2) and Joseph Bramlett (-11, T10) are also Stanford alumni. The university is across the bay approximately 35 miles from the course.
- \* Spencer Levin (-4, T44) leads two Monday qualifiers that made the cut, joining Nyasha Mauchaza (-2, T58).
- \* T.J. Vogel (-10, T13) carded an ace at the par-3, 182-yard 16<sup>th</sup> hole on Saturday, the first ace this week and the 17<sup>th</sup> ace in the tournament's 10-year history. The ace is also the 15<sup>th</sup> of the year on the Korn Ferry Tour in the 23<sup>rd</sup> tournament of the season.
- \* This week's purse is \$600,000, with \$108,000 going to the champion. The winner will also receive 500 Korn Ferry Tour points.
- \* Thirty-nine Korn Ferry Tour winners are in the field this week, with a combined 57 victories between them. Ten past PGA TOUR champions are in the field as well combining for 19 victories.
- \* The par-4 5<sup>th</sup> hole (377 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Saturday with a scoring average of 4.424.
- \* The par-5 third hole (625 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Saturday. The hole played to an average of 4.470.

**\* TPC Stonebrae Scoring Average:**

<b>Front (35)</b>	<b>Back (35)</b>	<b>Total (70)</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
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R1	35.250	35.314	70.564	
R2	33.871	34.542	68.413	69.489
R3	34.106	34.394	68.500	69.159

For highlights from today's round, or any 2019 event visit <http://bit.ly/kornferry2019video>

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