



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 10, 2019

CONTACT: Preston Smith, PrestonSmith@pgatourhq.com, 706-844-2100

Second-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Luke Guthrie	69-67—136 (-8)
2	Tim Wilkinson	71-67—138 (-6)
	Michael Gellerman	71-67—138 (-6)
4	Three players tied	139 (-5)

Luke Guthrie takes two-stroke lead at KC Golf Classic

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI – Despite not getting into the field until Monday morning (as an alternate), Luke Guthrie carded a second-round 67 to reach 8-under for the tournament and claim a two-stroke lead at the halfway point of the KC Golf Classic.

“I hit it really well yesterday, but today I actually did not drive it well at all,” said Guthrie, who hit eight of 14 fairways on Friday. “I was in the rough all day long. But I got out of trouble when I had to, took advantage with some good iron shots and putted really well on the back nine.”

Guthrie birdied Nos. 3 and 6, offset by a bogey at 4, to make the turn at 1-under and 4-under for the tournament. After three pars, the 29-year-old jumpstarted his round with an eagle at the par-5 13th before adding birdies on Nos. 15 and 17 on the way in.

“It was 271 yards to the hole,” said Guthrie of his shot into No. 13. “I think that might have been the only fairway I hit with my driver all day. I hit it off the right wind, a perfect 3-wood, and put it right in the middle of the green short of the shelf. I made a nice double-breaking putt right in the heart. After that I hit some really nice shots on the way in.”

Coming off a T56 finish last week in Nashville, Guthrie learned he had gotten into the field on Monday morning after he had already driven to visit his in-laws following the final round on Sunday. He drove six hours on Sunday evening to Bloomington, Illinois, and drove six more to Kansas City on Monday morning to Blue Hills Country Club, stopping on the way to eat pizza with his grandma in Quincy, Illinois.

Even after the late entry and an up-and-down year, Guthrie felt extremely comfortable at Blue Hills, a unique layout with tight, tree-lined fairways and thick rough.

“I grew up in this bluegrass rough,” said Guthrie. “We play a lot of events in the south with Bermuda rough and that can give me a few more problems. I can’t judge lies quite as well. I grew up on bluegrass rough so I feel a little more comfortable getting up and down around the greens.”

Guthrie, a University of Illinois alum, is playing in only his fourth Web.com Tour event of the year after beginning the season with conditional status. He missed his first two cuts before posting a T56 last week in Nashville. Guthrie earned his PGA TOUR card through the Web.com Tour in 2012 despite only playing in 10 events. In those 10 tournaments, Guthrie posted two wins, a runner-up and four additional top-10 finishes. That stretch included a T6 at the 2012 KC Golf Classic. He also posted a T2 finish at the 2017 KC Golf Classic held at Nicklaus Golf Club at LionsGate.



Tim Wilkinson and Michael Gellerman are T2 after 36 holes at 6-under 138. Wilkinson posted a 5-under 67 on Friday behind a stretch of four birdies in six holes from Nos. 11-16. The 40-year-old New Zealand native is seeking his third top-10 of the year. Gellerman, a University of Oklahoma alum, is seeking his third consecutive top-30 finish. The 26-year-old posted three consecutive birdies on Nos. 18, 1 and 2 on his way to a Friday 67.

FRIDAY NOTES:

* Friday's weather: Partly cloudy, high of 62, winds N/NE at 6-12 miles per hour. Players played lift, clean and place during the second round due to wet course conditions.

* The 36-hole cut came at 2-over 146 with 75 professionals advancing to the weekend.

* Blue Hills has a rich history with legends of the game. Most notably, the Club hosted Tom Watson's Children's Mercy Hospital Golf Classic for 25 years through 2005. Along with Watson, a local resident, other legends to compete included Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Lee Trevino. The event raised more than \$12 million over the years for the hospital and was one of the largest grossing charity events of its kind.

* Local favorite Harry Higgs (-4, T7) jumped into contention with a second-round 67. Higgs starred at nearby Blue Valley North High School and estimated he had played Blue Hills Country Club more than 50 times growing up.

* Austin Smotherman, a former teammate of Higgs and Bryson DeChambeau at Southern Methodist University, carded a second-round 67 to jump to T4 (-5). Both Smotherman and Higgs play at Trinity Forest often (site of this week's AT&T Byron Nelson). They each are looking to become the first rookie to win on the Web.com Tour this season. The last rookie to win on Tour was Kramer Hickok at the 2018 DAP Championship.

* Jack Maguire (-5, T4) had missed his previous nine cuts this season. He sunk an approximately 50-foot putt for birdie at the last (No. 9) on Friday. Matt Harmon also sits T4 despite only hitting six of 14 fairways during the second round.

* Chris Naegel (-4, T7) paced the 12 Monday qualifiers in the field. Naegel Monday qualified into the LECOM Suncoast Classic in February and finished T25 to earn a spot into the following week's tournament, one of 10 Monday qualifiers this year to earn a top-25 finish.

* Kyle Reifers (-4, T7) posted the round of the day with a 6-under 66. He began his round eagle-birdie-birdie to reach 4-under through three holes.

* Ryan Yip (+7, MC) aced the 223-yard, par-3 eighth hole, the first ace of the week at the KC Golf Classic and the seventh ace of the year on Tour.

* This year marks the first year the KC Golf Classic is hosted at Blue Hills Country Club. The previous nine years of the tournament were held at Nicklaus Golf Club at LionsGate.

* This week's purse is \$675,000, with \$121,500 going to the champion. The champion will also earn 500 points in the Web.com Tour points system.

* Forty-seven former Web.com Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 65 victories, as well as eight PGA TOUR champions (equaling 18 victories).



* The par-4 fourth hole (446 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Friday with a scoring average of 4.382.

* The par-5 first hole (523 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Friday. The hole played to an average of 4.678 and yielded two eagles and 67 birdies to the 156-player field.

* Blue Hills Country Club Scoring Averages:

	Front (36)	Back (36)	Total (72)	Cumulative
R1	36.851	36.740	73.591	
R2	36.579	36.572	73.151	73.374

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