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Second-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Mark Hubbard	65-65—130 (-12)
2	Billy Kennerly	65-66—131 (-11)
3	Robby Shelton	67-65—132 (-10)
	Ryan Brehm	64-68—132 (-10)
5	Three players tied	133 (-9)

Mark Hubbard takes 36-hole lead at Knoxville Open

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee – Entering the day one stroke back, Mark Hubbard overcame a slow start to post five back nine birdies and take a one-stroke lead entering the weekend at the Knoxville Open. Hubbard carded his second consecutive 65 to reach 12-under 130 at the halfway point at Fox Den Country Club.

With a win under his belt earlier this year at the LECOM Suncoast Classic, Hubbard is in position to earn his PGA TOUR card for the 2019-2020 season with a strong finish in Knoxville.

“[With a win already] You’re really just trying to have good finishes moving forward,” said Hubbard, who hit all 14 fairways on Friday. “I’m absolutely trying to win, but at the same time, if I play good golf the rest of the year, I’m in a good spot to get my card. This year I’ve gotten so much better playing my own game and figuring out what I need to do with my game to play well.”

Even with softer course conditions after overnight rain, Hubbard parred his first six holes before a birdie at the seventh led to a 1-under on the front nine. The Denver native jumpstarted his round after the turn, tallying birdies at the 10th, 12th, 13th, 17th and 18th to close out a bogey-free 65. He is one of three players without a bogey through 36 holes.

“I felt the urgency to start the day after a slow start,” said Hubbard. “For a while there, I was just like, ‘Alright, do your thing and if you shoot even today, you’re still in it.’ I was checking out the leaderboard a little bit to make sure that nobody was running away with it. For me the back nine suits my eye better. If I just play the front nine under par, I’ll be in a good spot this week.”

Despite Hubbard’s slow start, his back-nine ball striking led to a stress-free close to the round. On No. 12, Hubbard stuck it inside three feet and followed that up with a near ace at the par-3 13th for a tap-in birdie. To finish his round, he hit the ball inside six feet at the 17th and four feet at the 18th.

“I thought it was going in,” said Hubbard of his shot at the 13th. “We were trying to hit the same exact number as the hole before. Everything was set up. It was a gettable hole...That would have been my ninth ace. I had my eighth in Nashville. Tennessee is a good spot for me, I guess.”

Spurred by his win earlier this season, Hubbard entered the week ninth on the Web.com Tour Regular Season points list with 626 points. The San Jose State University alum is looking to graduate from the Web.com Tour for the second time. The 29-year-old originally graduated in 2014 and spent three years on the PGA TOUR before returning to the Web.com Tour over the past two seasons.



Clemson University alum Billy Kennerly sits one shot back at 11-under 131 after a second-round 66. Kennerly notched birdies at Nos. 12 and 18 on the back nine before earning birdies at the third, fourth, eighth and ninth coming in (against a lone bogey). The 26-year-old entered the week 47th on the points list with three top-25s on the season.

Third-round tee times will run from 6:54 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. on Saturday off of the first tee.

FRIDAY NOTES:

- * Friday's weather: Partly cloudy. High of 87. Winds SW at 7-12 mile per hour. Players played lift, clean and place during the second round due to wet course conditions from overnight rain.
- * The 36-hole cut came at 3-under 139 with 73 professionals advancing to the weekend.
- * Mark Hubbard seeks to become the fourth 36-hole leader/co-leader to go on and win this season. Vince Covello (Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTAS), Dan McCarthy (Savannah Golf Championship) and Xinjun Zhang (Dormie Network Classic) accomplished the feat earlier this year.
- * Hubbard entered the week No. 9 on the Regular Season points list and is projected to need a finish of a three-way tie for second or better to lock up his TOUR card this week.
- * Billy Kennerly (2nd/-11) recorded his career-low 36-hole score of 131 at Fox Den Country Club. Previous best was 132 at the 2018 Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS and the 2017 Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank.
- * Ryan Brehm, who held the 18-hole lead, bogeyed his last two holes en route to a 3-under 68 (T3/-10). The Michigan State University alum finished T3 at the 2016 Knoxville Open, his best finish in two previous starts at this event.
- * Robby Shelton (T3/-10) has finished inside the top five in three of his last four starts (P2/Robert Trent Jones Golf, T4/Dormie Network Classic, Won/Nashville Golf Open)
- * Xinjun Zhang, who sits No. 1 on the Regular Season points list, carded a 6-under 65 on Friday and sits three shots off the lead (T5/-9). Zhang owns four top-10 finishes in 11 previous starts this season, highlighted by a commanding five-shot victory at the Dormie Network Classic at Briggs Ranch.
- * Knoxville resident Wes Roach followed up an opening-round 71 with a 67 on Friday to make the cut (T41). He finished T4 at this event in 2018, his best finish in six previous starts.
- * Vincent Whaley, Will Cannon, Jeffrey Kang, Ryan Yip and Conrad Shindler shared the low round of the day, carding 7-under 64s. Cannon (T41) made the cut for the first time in his eighth career start, posting his career-low round on Tour.
- * Five Monday Qualifiers made the cut, led by Grant Hirschman and Matthew Short at 7-under 135 (T12).
- * This week's purse is \$550,000, with \$99,000 going to the winner. The champion will also earn 500 points in the Web.com Tour points system.
- * Forty-five former Web.com Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 63 victories, as well as 11 PGA TOUR champions (equaling 21 victories).



* Entering its 30th year, the Knoxville Open is one of four original tournaments from 1990 that are still on the Web.com Tour schedule. The Wichita Open Supporting Wichita's Youth, the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper and the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco round out the original tournaments from 1990.

* The par-4 fourth hole (436 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Friday with a scoring average of 4.098.

* The par-5 10th hole (561 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Friday. The hole played to an average of 4.405 and yielded nine eagles and 82 birdies to the 156-player field.

* Fox Den Country Club Scoring Averages:

	Front (35)	Back (36)	Total (71)	Cumulative
R1	35.192	35.628	70.821	
R2	34.458	34.889	69.346	70.083

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