



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 14, 2019

CONTACT: Preston Smith, [PrestonSmith@pgatourhq.com](mailto:PrestonSmith@pgatourhq.com), 706-844-2100

### First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Maverick McNealy	64 (-8)
	J.T. Griffin	(-8)*
3	Mark Hubbard	65 (-7)
	Wade Binfield	65 (-7)
5	11 players tied at	66 (-6)

*\*Through 15 holes when play was suspended*

## Maverick McNealy opens with 64 to lead LECOM Suncoast Classic

**LAKEWOOD RANCH, Florida** – After making the turn at 1-under, Maverick McNealy birdied seven of his final eight holes on Thursday to post an 8-under 64 and lead the LECOM Suncoast Classic by two strokes. The 64 ties a career-low for McNealy, a mark he reached three times as a rookie last year. Georgia Tech alum J.T. Griffin also sits 8-under but has only completed 15 holes as play was suspended due to darkness at 6:21 p.m.

“I just hit shot after shot,” said McNealy. “It was one of those days where you forget how many under you are because you’re playing so well. My game’s been really good for two months, and I felt like it was just a matter of time before I shot a really low nine like that. I actually shot 28 on the back nine during the Pro-Am last week, but it’s nice to do it during the actual tournament.”

Starting on the 10<sup>th</sup> tee, McNealy posted birdies at the 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> along with bogeys at the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> to make the turn at 1-under. After a par at the first, the Stanford University alum started a three-birdie streak at the par-4 second hole, the toughest hole by scoring average on the course. The 23-year-old broke his streak with a par at the fifth but closed with three consecutive birdies to cap the round.

“My best shot all day was actually a layup on No. 9,” said McNealy. “It was my last hole of the day, the ball was below my feet, straight into the wind, with bushes to the left and a bunker to the right, and I hit a beautiful 2-iron in this 30-yard gap which gave me a wedge up and in for birdie to finish. I told Travis [caddie] as soon as I hit it that that was the best shot all day.”

McNealy’s 29 on the front nine was made all the more impressive considering the rest of the field’s performance. The opening three holes (Nos. 1-3) ranked as the three toughest on the golf course. The par-4 second hole played at 515 yards, while the par-3 third hole played to 249 yards. McNealy birdied both. The front nine as a whole played more than a stroke tougher than the back by scoring average.

“Tee to green, this is one of the more interesting Florida golf courses I’ve ever seen,” said McNealy, a former world No. 1-ranked amateur. “It’s in fantastic shape and it’s tough enough to keep it interesting but fair...I’m excited to be back in the United States. It’s nice to be driving a car for the first time in four weeks and to be able to eat healthy more easily.”



The LECOM Suncoast Classic is the first Web.com Tour event inside the United States of the 2019 season after four straight weeks of international travel.

Before play was suspended, 31-year-old J.T. Griffin tallied eight birdies with no bogeys, including seven in an eight-hole stretch from Nos. 4-11. His best finish thus far on the Web.com Tour was T14 last year at the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Heartland Chevy Dealers.

Mark Hubbard made the turn at 1-under before going 6-under on the back nine en route to a 7-under 65 to sit T3. Hubbard is coming off a top-20 finish in Panamá and is seeking his first Web.com Tour win in his 65<sup>th</sup> career start. Joining Hubbard at T3 is Wade Binfield, who began the year with conditional status before posting a T9 finish on a sponsor's exemption in Abaco and earning starts via the season's first reshuffle. The former high school substitute teacher carded eight birdies and a bogey at the third to finish at 7-under.

Eleven players sit tied for fifth at 6-under 66. Notables include 2003 Masters champion Mike Weir, Tampa native Jimmy Stanger and Tyler McCumber, the 2018 Order of Merit winner on the Mackenzie Tour – PGA TOUR Canada.

#### **THURSDAY NOTES:**

\* Thursday's weather: Sunny, high of 75, winds E/SE at 5-15 miles per hour. The temperature was approximately 46 degrees at 7 a.m. when tee times began. Play was suspended due to darkness at 6:21 p.m. The first round will continue beginning at 7:45 a.m. on Friday. Second-round tee times will remain the same.

\* 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 former Web.com Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 57 victories, as well as 12 PGA TOUR champions (equaling 30 victories).

\* Maverick McNealy's 7-under 29 ties two others as the low nine of the year thus far. The other two were Andrew Novak in Bogotá and Paul Imondi in Abaco.

\* In his previous round on the Web.com Tour, the second round of the Panamá Championship, Michael Johnson carded an 87. He beat that by 20 strokes today, finishing at 5-under 67 and T16.

\* Entering the day as the first alternate, Charlie Saxon learned 24 minutes before his tee time (7:22 a.m.) that he had gotten into the field after a withdrawal from Steve Marino. Saxon took advantage of the opportunity, posting a 4-under 68 to sit T29.

\* Willy Wilcox became the fourth player this season to record two eagles in the same round on Thursday with eagles at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The other three are Vincent Whaley, Brandon Matthews and Joseph Winslow.

\* The par-4 second hole (515 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Thursday with a scoring average of 4.646. That mark would top the highest scoring average on a hole thus far this season if it holds through the weekend. The current toughest hole in relation to par is the par-3 second hole at the Country Club de Bogotá – Pacos course at 3.566.

\* The par-4 fourth hole (298 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Thursday. The drivable hole played to an average of 3.361 and yielded 10 eagles.



\* The Lakewood National Golf Club Scoring Averages:

	Front (36)	Back (36)	Total (72)	Cumulative
R1	36.021	34.751	70.772	

*For highlights from today's round, or any 2019 event visit <http://bit.ly/webcom2019video>*

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