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First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Billy Kennerly	65 (-6)
2	Matthew Campbell	66 (-5)
3	Brian Campbell	67 (-4)
	Brad Hopfinger	67 (-4)
5	Nine tied at	68 (-3)

Billy Kennerly takes first-round lead at Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Billy Kennerly survived windy conditions at Panther Creek Country Club to post a 6-under 65 and take a one-stroke lead after the first round at the Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS. Blustery conditions led to a first-round scoring average more than four and a half strokes higher than last year's opening round.

"I made a couple of midrange putts today and that makes scoring easier," said Kennerly. "It's tough to hit it terribly close in this wind, but I hit some good shots and some putts dropped. I guess I made a lot of birdies that I didn't necessarily expect to make."

Kennerly led the field with eight birdies – two more than any other player – including a chip-in from off the green on the third hole. He began his round with a bogey but birdied three of his next four to go 2-under on the front nine before tallying five birdies and a bogey on the back nine to reach 6-under.

"I played well...I bogeyed the first one, but that's a really tough hole today, long and into the wind," said Kennerly. "A bogey there wasn't terrible, still not a great start, but then I kicked it into gear after that. I hit the middle of the greens a lot and then just made a few longer putts."

The 26-year-old capped off his round with a 20-foot birdie putt, one he said would "make dinner taste a little better."

Winds averaging 12-20 miles per hour (and reaching 30 miles per hour) had an obvious effect on scores in comparison to previous years. In last year's first round, 36 players carded a 66 or better in mild conditions. This year, that number was two.

"Today was a lot different than last year's tournament," said Kennerly. "It just depends on the wind here. Two years ago it was similar to today with firmer, windier conditions, but last year it was softer and milder."

Kennerly hit 14 out of 18 greens (T9) and 10 of 14 fairways (T11) on Thursday. The Clemson alum was joined on the course by his sister Wilton, who regularly caddies for him on Tour.



"It was originally her idea," said Kennerly on who thought of the idea for her to caddie. "It happened back in college, she wanted to caddie, and I said, 'if we can finish top-5, you can keep caddying,' thinking it wouldn't happen. Then it did, so she's caddied ever since."

Making his Web.com Tour debut, Matthew Campbell sits one shot off the lead. Campbell birdied five of his first eight holes before eventually finishing at 5-under 66. He began the week expecting to compete in the Massachusetts Open, but withdrew after receiving the call that he had gotten into the field in Springfield as an alternate.

"The Massachusetts Open started Monday and ended Wednesday, but my tee time was in the afternoon on Tuesday and I got the call early that morning," said Campbell, originally from Rome, New York. "So I withdrew, booked a flight, took a bus down to the airport and here I am."

After reaching out to Panther Creek Country Club about a last-minute caddie, Tobin Nell, a local golfer at Glenwood High School, toted the bag for Campbell on Thursday.

Second-round tee times will run in two waves from 6:30 a.m. to 1:40 p.m. on Friday at Panther Creek Country Club.

THURSDAY NOTES:

* Thursday's weather: Mostly Sunny, High of 72. Winds NW at 12-20 miles per hour with gusts up to 30 miles per hour.

* The wind's effect on first-round scoring was evident in comparison to last year's pace. In 2018, 36 players carded a 66 or better during the first round. This year, only two players carded rounds of 66 or better (Billy Kennerly, Matthew Campbell). Scoring average in the first round this year was 72.935, compared to 68.348 in last year's first round.

* The 18-hole lead is the first time Billy Kennerly has led after the first round on the Web.com Tour in his 53rd career start. With a win, Kennerly would earn his PGA TOUR card for the first time.

* While he is making his debut this week on the Web.com Tour, Campbell has made one previous start on the PGA TOUR: the 2017 U.S. Open (MC).

* Brian Campbell (T3), who starred at the University of Illinois, sits two shots back, tied with University of Iowa alum Brad Hopfinger. Campbell was named Big Ten Player of the Year in 2014 while with the Fighting Illini.

* Canadian Michael Gligic (T14) carded a 2-under 69 on Thursday. Currently at 719 points, Gligic would need a three-way tie for fourth (or better) to project to earn his PGA TOUR card this week. The current projection to finish inside The 25 is 830 points.

* Former Haskins Award winner and No. 1 amateur in the world Braden Thornberry opened with a 3-under 68 (T5). Thornberry is looking to top his best career finish of T22 (2018 North Mississippi Classic).

* Thursday marked the beginning of the fourth Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS, with each iteration of the tournament taking place at Panther Creek Country Club. Each of the three previous winners of the tournament have gone on to earn their PGA TOUR card in the Regular Season as a member of The 25. Last year's champion, Anders Albertson, set a tournament record at 25-under 259.



* 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.

* Thirty-seven former Web.com Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 52 victories, as well as six PGA TOUR champions (equaling seven victories).

* The par-4 first hole (510 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on Thursday at Panther Creek with an average of 4.701.

* The par-5 16th hole (529 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Thursday at Panther Creek with an average of 4.338.

* Panther Creek Country Club Scoring Averages:

	Front (35)	Back (36)	Total (71)	Cumulative
R1	36.417	36.518	72.935	

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