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First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Byron Meth	64 (-7)
T2	Chad Ramey	66 (-5)
T2	Tyson Alexander	66 (-5)
T4	Six players tied	67 (-4)

First career albatross lifts Meth to two-shot lead at Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Chevrolet

Omaha, Neb. — Byron Meth knows it's early. He said so himself.

"I'm just trying to keep the pedal down," he noted, "and make as many birdies and eagles as I can."

"And, hey, an albatross as well."

Mission accomplished.

Meth carded the first albatross of his career Thursday at the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Chevrolet, turning what had been a one-shot deficit into a two-stroke advantage. The wild moment at The Club at Indian Creek sealed a rousing 7-under 64 for the San Diego product, two shots clear of Chad Ramey and Tyson Alexander. Six players are tied for fourth at 3-under.

"It's a little laughable, to be honest," he said. "We're all trying to hole every shot as long as there's no trouble around a hole. We're aiming right at a pin and hoping it's going in. Then it does and I see people jumping around in the background. It's so fun. It's why we play the game, to have moments like this. It's a story I'll tell forever."

The unforgettable shot couldn't have come at a better time for the 26-year-old, who dropped out of a three-way tie atop the leaderboard when he bogeyed the par-4 14th. But that mattered little on the ensuing par-5, when his second shot from 219 yards landed eight feet from the hole and rolled in.

A cameraman "was behind the green back there, and I thought, 'This would be a good one to stuff in there,'" he recalled. "Then he goes nuts and I'm like, 'Well, I guess it went in.' It was pretty sweet, that was my first one ever. They hardly ever come around, so it's great to have one. (The ball) was dead into the sun with a big ball of fire in the sky and I couldn't see anything."

Meth's wife, Valentina, was on the bag, as she has been all season. She convinced him to use a 5-iron for the decisive shot, as he originally approached the ball with a 4-iron in hand.

"It's awesome. That's one of the reasons why we're doing this," he said. "We get to experience traveling around the world together and seeing all the different golf shots. Having an albatross is the first one ever. It's just awesome."

It was the third albatross of the year, alongside Henrik Norlander's in the third round of the Savannah Golf Championship and Paul Imondi's in the second round of the LECOM Suncoast Classic. More importantly, it was enough to outlast Ramey and Alexander, who each carded a 5-under 66 to settle into a tie for second.

Ramey carded six birdies in an eight-hole stretch, beginning with a 38-foot putt at the par-3 fifth, and temporarily took the solo lead before posting a bogey at No. 16. It continued a recent surge for the Mississippi State product, who has two top-15 finishes over his last four starts, as he looks to make a late-season surge on the points list.

"The past month or so I've been doing a really good job of resting Monday through Wednesday," said Ramey, who has made all 20 starts this year. "I'm just trying to stay really good mentally, which is harder than the physical part of it. But I feel like I've been doing a really good job of it."

"Where I'm at on the points list, if I ended up taking an event off and it ended up coming down to a point or two, I would feel pretty stupid because I was just sitting at home," added Ramey, who sits at No. 74 in the standings.

Alexander, meanwhile, closed with birdies on four of his final six holes and got up-and-down for par at the last to stay within two shots. The 31-year-old entered this week with four consecutive top-25 finishes and hopes to add another with the year winding down.

"It's not perfect, but I'm scoring pretty well, which is nice," he said. "A lot of times we can play really good golf and not score, and I'm not doing the opposite of that but I'm getting the ball in the hole pretty good. I'm playing a little better and a little bit of luck can go a long way."

THURSDAY NOTES:

* Thursday's weather: Morning thunderstorms, sunny, high of 97 with a heat index of 108, winds S/SW 12-18 mph with gusts up to 25 mph.

* Morning thunderstorms delayed the start of play by 90 minutes Thursday morning. Play began at 8:10 a.m.

* This week's purse is \$600,000, with \$108,000 going to the champion. The winner will also receive 500 Korn Ferry Tour points.

- * Byron Meth carded an albatross on the par-5, 573-yard 15th hole, the first of his career. The last albatross on the Korn Ferry Tour was made by Henrik Norlander in the third round of the Savannah Golf Championship earlier this season.
- * This is the first time Meth has held the solo-lead after 18-holes on the Korn Ferry Tour. He held a share of the lead after the first round of the 2019 Savannah Golf Championship, eventually finishing T70.
- * Meth's 64 was good for the lowest round of his Korn Ferry Tour career and matched his lowest round in relation to par this season.
- * Omaha, Neb., native Scott Gutschewski sits T37 after a first-round 70. Gutschewski finished in a tie for second at the inaugural Pinnacle Bank Championship in 2017.
- * Norfolk, Neb., native Luke Kluver posted a first-round 71 and is currently T57. Kluver is playing as an amateur this week and won the Indian Creek Invitational last weekend to earn a spot in the field.
- * Local resident Ryan Vermeer sits T95 after posting a 2-over 73 on Thursday. In 2018, Vermeer became the first player from the Nebraska PGA Section to win the PGA Professional Championship.
- * Nebraska native Brandon Crick (T114, 3-over) previously worked at The Club at Indian Creek six years ago as a member of the golf staff.
- * Sam Love learned he was officially in the field minutes before his tee time after Mark Hensby withdrew early Thursday morning. He sits at T57 after an opening-round 71.
- * Forty-seven Korn Ferry Tour winners are in the field this week, combining for 70 victories.
- * The par-3 eighth hole (212 yards) and the par-4 16th hole (482 yards) ranked as the toughest holes on the course on Thursday. Both holes played to an average of .301 strokes over par.
- * The par-5 15th hole (573 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Thursday. The hole played to an average of 4.558 and yielded one albatross, four eagles and 74 birdies.

***The Club at Indian Creek Scoring Average:**

	Front	Back	Total	Cumulative
R1	36.436	35.327	71.763	

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

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