**First-Round Leaderboard**

**Abierto Mexicano de Golf**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pos.** | **Name** | **Scores** | **Current OOM\*\*** |
| 1 | Matthew Pinizzotto (U.S.) | 32-31—63 (-7) | N/A |
| T2 | Edward Figueroa (Puerto Rico) | 31-33—64 (-6) | 75 |
| T2 | Drew Nesbitt (Canada) | 32-32—64 (-6) | 85 |
| T4 | Carson Jacobs (U.S.) | 32-33—65 (-5) | 59 |
| T4 | Augusto Nunez (Argentina) | 31-34—65 (-5) | 2 |
| T4 | Mito Pereira (Chile) | 34-31—65 (-5) | 5 |
| T7 | Harrison Endycott (Australia) | 31-35—66 (-4) | 5 |
| T7 | Will Collins (U.S.) | 33-33—66 (-4) | 54 |
| T7 | Nicholas Maruri (Mexico) | 33-33—66 (-4) | 65 |
| T7 | Shad Tuten (U.S.) | 32-34—66 (-4) | 34 |

\*\* As of May 19

**In season debut, Pinizzotto is stellar as he takes lead in Tijuana**

TIJUANA, Mexico—Matthew Pinizzotto made his first PGA TOUR Latinoamerica start of the season a memorable one. The good times started early and remained until his final stroke of Pinizzotto’s day, a 25-foot birdie putt on No. 18 that led to a first-round, 7-under 63 and a one-shot lead at the Abierto Mexicano de Golf.

Pinizzotto, a 79th-place finisher on the 2018 Order of Merit and carrying only conditional status this season, has been unable to get into any of the Tour’s early events. Wasting little time, he made the most of his opportunity Thursday at Tijuana Country Club.

The former UCLA Bruin began his round—and season—at Mexico’s national open with three consecutive pars before a three-birdie-in-four-hole stretch took him to 3-under as he made the turn. Two birdies and an eagle on his next six holes allowed him to survive a double bogey-5 on the par-3 16th. He finished in style, with birdies at Nos. 17 and 18, to lead Edward Figueroa and Drew Nesbitt by a shot. A trio of players, Carson Jacobs, Augusto Nunez and Mito Pereira, are two shots back.

Pinizzotto’s eagle at 12 and his birdie at No. 18 were both particularly memorable parts of his round. After hitting what he called “probably my worst drive of the day” at the par-4 12th hole, and facing 60 yards to the pin, he left his approach about four feet short of the green and watched as it rolled straight into the cup. “Anytime you hole-out you kind of know things are going your way,” he said. Pinizzotto then banged in a long birdie putt on his last hole to put the finishing touches on his career-low PGA TOUR Latinoamerica round.

“I’m already having a good round. To get one more on the last like that, that was cool,” Pinizzotto added.

**Did you know Matthew Pinizzotto** played college golf at UCLA? His Bruin teammates, among others, included current Web.com Tour member Lorens Chan, Mackenize Tour – PGA TOUR Canada member Jay Hwang, PGA TOUR Series-China’s Corey Shaun and PGA TOUR Latinoamerica member Manav Shah.

**Key Information**

* Matthew Pinizzotto shattered his career-best 18-hole score with his 7-under 63 Thursday. Previously, Pinizzotto had shot a pair of 67s to establish personal-bests. His first 67 came a year ago in the second round at this tournament. He also shot a second-round 67 at the Costa Rica Classic.
* There’s something about Tijuana Country Club that appeals to Matthew Pinizzotto. In his second start of 2018, Pinizzotto shot three 68s and the second-round 67 to tie for 10th for his top finish of the year and of his career.
* Augusto Nunez continues to play the most-consistent golf of anybody on PGA TOUR Latinoamerica. The Argentine opened with a 5-under 65. He is working on a streak of 11 consecutive rounds at par or better, with 10 of those rounds under-par. Nunez has also not missed a cut this season and is in prime position to not only keep that streak alive but to once again contend following his runner-up finish a week ago at the BMW Jamaica Classic.
* At 1-under through 15 holes, with one birdie and 14 pars, Augusto Nunez was having something of an indifferent round when he quickly changed his fortunes. After a birdie at No. 7, his 16th hole of the day, he followed that with another birdie before making an eagle-3 at the par-5 ninth. He finished the day at 5-under.
* Symetra Tour member Paola Pavon struggled as she became the first female to play in a PGA TOUR Latinoamerica tournament. She shot an 11-over 80, with four bogeys and four double bogeys. Her lone birdie came at the par-4 12th.
* There are three amateurs in the field, all from Mexico. Aaron Terrazas had the lowest round of the three, a 2-over 72. Daniel Kim opened with a 73 and Diego Cordoba shot a 79.
* The only first-round leader this season to turn that advantage into a victory came courtesy of Jared Wolfe at the season-opening Buenaventura Classic.
* Matthew Pinizzotto is the fifth player this season to hold the outright, first-round lead. He joins Alfredo Adrián (Molino Cañuelas Championship), Alex Weiss (Abierto de Chile), Paulo Pinto (Abierto OSDE del Centro) and amateur Juan Jose Guerra (Puerto Plata Open).
* Order of Merit leader Tom Whitney shot a 2-under 68 and is five shots off the lead heading to the second round. He’s tied for 22nd.

**Quotable**

“It was pretty stress-free for the most part.” **–Matthew Pinizzotto**

“My game has been OK, but it hasn’t been great or anything. Coming into today, I had low expectations. I think that goes well sometimes when you don’t expect much and you go about your business.” **–Matthew Pinizzotto**

“I played this tournament last year and did OK. I have some confidence on this course, and I feel like I know it pretty well. I took confidence from that from last year.” **–Matthew Pinizzotto**

“When you putt that well, it allows you not to get ahead of yourself and play smart golf. That’s exactly what I did.” **–Drew Nesbitt**

“Just confidence and self-belief. I watched the PGA Championship pretty closely last week, what Brooks Koepka did. It was probably one of the most-inspirational things I have seen. The way he goes about his business, I’m just trying to emulate that.” **–Drew Nesbitt**

“I think going home for that week was really nice to have that week off, to be in the States and to get away from golf. The first five in six weeks that we played was the first time I’ve been gone that long—especially out of the country. I think mentally I was a little drained. I think being home really affected that in a positive way.” **–Carson Jacobs**

“I think the key is just to hit the fairways. I grew up on a tree-lined course, so I feel comfortable here. The greens are awesome—probably the best greens we’ve played all year.” **–Carson Jacobs**

“Anytime you make a 2 on a par-4, that gets things going. Everything was solid. I made a bunch of clutch par putts when I needed them.” **–Carson Jacobs on his eagle and his putting**

**Tournament Fast Fact**

Al Espinosa won the first of four consecutive Abierto de Mexicano de Golf titles at the inaugural event in 1944, at Chapultepec Golf Club. There was no tournament in 1948, and Tony Holguin won the 1949 and 1950 tournaments, giving the event only two winners in its first six playings.

**First-Round Weather Report**

Partly cloudy and pleasant. High of 65. Wind WSW at 5-7 mph.