

## Olympic Golf - Men's Competition – COMPLETED Second Round Notes and Summary

July 31, 2021

Kasumigaseki Country Club - East Course - Par 71, 7,466 yards

Due to lightning, the second round was suspended at 11:57 a.m. and resumed at 2:21 p.m., a delay of 2 hours, 24 minutes. Another thunderstorm forced the second round to be suspended for the day at 5:20 p.m. with 16 players left to complete round two. Play resumed at 7:45 a.m. Saturday morning with 16 players completing the round, which finished at 8:21 a.m. Round three began at 9:30 a.m. off split tees.

### Leaders/Leader Notes

Xander Schauffele	USA	68-63—131 (-11)
Carlos Ortiz	Mexico	65-67—132 (-10)
Hideki Matsuyama	Japan	69-64—133 (-9)
Mito Pereira	Chile	69-65—134 (-8)
Alex Noren	Sweden	67-67—134 (-8)
Sepp Straka	Austria	63-71—134 (-8)

<b>Xander Schauffele</b>	
Olympic Ranking	3
Official World Golf Ranking	5
Professional Victories	4
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father Stefan is French/German and grew up in Germany as an Olympic decathlete hopeful before a car crash with a drunk driver caused loss of vision in his left eye, ending his Olympic dream at age 20</li> <li>• Mother Ping Yi is from Chinese Taipei and grew up in Japan</li> <li>• Two of Xander's great-grandfathers played soccer at the European premier level</li> <li>• His grandparents from mother's side currently reside in Tokyo</li> <li>• Owns four PGA TOUR victories, including the 2017 TOUR Championship</li> <li>• Won twice as a rookie and was voted the 2016-2017 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year</li> </ul>

<b>Carlos Ortiz</b>	
Olympic Ranking	20
Official World Golf Ranking	61
Professional Victories	4
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ortiz is staying in the Olympic Village and soaking up the experience, calling it a once-in-a-lifetime experience; he is staying with members of the Mexican boxing team</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He's trying to add to his medal collection, having won a bronze medal in the 2011 Sumer Universiade team competition</li> <li>• Has the distinction of being the first Mexican player to win on the PGA TOUR in 42 years (2020)</li> <li>• He currently owns one PGA TOUR victory and three Korn Ferry Tour wins</li> <li>• Was voted the 2014 Korn Ferry Tour Player of the Year</li> <li>• Golf championships run in the family as younger brother, Alvaro, won the 2019 Latin America Amateur Championship</li> </ul>
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<b>Hideki Matsuyama</b>	
Olympic Ranking	6
Official World Golf Ranking	20
Professional Victories	15
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts bogey-free second-round, including birdies on Nos. 17 and 18 on Saturday morning to complete the round</li> <li>• Holds six PGA TOUR victories, including the 2021 Masters which made him the first Japanese male major champion</li> <li>• Received the Prime Minister's Award following his Masters win</li> <li>• Born in Ehime, he was introduced to golf by his father at age four</li> <li>• Won the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship in 2010 at Kasumigaseki Country Club and repeated as champion in 2011 at Singapore Island Country Club</li> <li>• Winner of the 2009 Japan Junior Championship at Kasumigaseki</li> <li>• Claimed the gold medal at 2011 World University Games</li> </ul>

<b>Mito Pereira</b>	
Olympic Ranking	36
Official World Golf Ranking	118
Professional Victories	4
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highest rank as an amateur was No.5 on the World Amateur Golf Ranking</li> <li>• Attended Texas Tech University for one golf season before turning pro</li> <li>• First player from Chile to win on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica (2016)</li> <li>• 12<sup>th</sup> player in Korn Ferry Tour history to earn a three-win promotion to the PGA TOUR (2021)</li> <li>• Third player from Chile to secure the PGA TOUR card (2021)</li> <li>• Good friend with his fellow countryman and Olympian, Joaquin Niemann</li> </ul>

<b>Alex Noren</b>	
Olympic Ranking	27
Official World Golf Ranking	92
Professional Victories	11
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First tried golf at 4 years of age</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At age 15, was employed as junior editor at <i>Svensk Golf</i>, the official magazine of the Swedish Golf Federation</li> <li>• Represented Sweden as an amateur on all levels, including the 2004 Eisenhower Trophy, where the Swedish team finished as bronze medalists and he was T3 as an individual</li> <li>• Attended Oklahoma State University and played on the golf team before turning professional</li> <li>• Won his first of 10 European Tour titles at 2009 Omega European Masters</li> <li>• Was named 2016 Best Athlete in Stockholm by the Stockholm Sports Federation and the Stockholm Sport Journalists Club</li> </ul>
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<b>Sepp Straka</b>	
Olympic Ranking	40
Official World Golf Ranking	161
Professional Victories	1
2016 Rio Olympics	N/A
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following his 63, Straka was on the verge of playing himself out of contention with three early bogeys, but he recovered and birdied the final hole to match par 71</li> <li>• Final birdie followed a bogey-5 from the bunker on No. 17</li> </ul>

## Summary

### Schauffele beats weather suspension to take Olympic lead with record-tying round of 63

KAWAGOE, JAPAN – One record-tying round of 8-under-par 63 was matched by another as Xander Schauffele of the USA supplanted Sepp Straka of Austria atop the leaderboard during Friday’s second round of the men’s Olympic golf competition at Kasumigaseki Country Club.

While Schauffele appears headed to a 1-stroke lead over Carlos Ortiz of Mexico, two afternoon weather delays cut short an official conclusion to the day, stranding 16 players who now must complete their round Saturday at 7:45 a.m. local time. Fortunate for Schauffele and Ortiz, they were in the last two groupings to complete their round.

Among those returning to complete the second round Saturday was the host country’s great hope, Masters champion Hideki Matsuyama, who birdied his two remaining holes to post 7-under 64 to reach 9-under and secure a spot in the final grouping for round three with Schauffele and Ortiz .

“My feeling is not that great but I am coming into the weekend with a good condition,” said Matsuyama after his 64. “I would like to get myself in shape and I would like to deliver my good performance (for round three).”

So, as it currently stands, Schauffele leads the chase for Olympic gold at 11-under-par 131 following a round that featured two eagles and six birdies, including three straight to finish his round. In doing so, he equaled the Olympic record that was established in golf’s return at the 2016 Rio Olympics and matched Thursday by Straka.

Ortiz, who took the lead earlier in the day at 10-under on the strength of an eagle-2 at the shortened 294-yard 6<sup>th</sup> hole which Schauffele also eagled, finished at 67—132. Matsuyama sits two off the lead at 9-under (64) after notching a bogey-free round, including birdies on holes 17 and 18, which he completed Saturday. Three players are in at 133 – Straka (71), Mito Pereira of Chile (65) and Alex Noren of Sweden (67).

Still, the day's headline belonged to Schauffele, who was glad to finish but wished he could have kept going. "I just kind got in a nice flow there at the end," he said. "Kind of one of those situations where I wish I could play some more holes. It was nice to sort of make that last putt on 18 before the they blew that horn."

He had just made his eagle-2 and was on the par-3 7<sup>th</sup> when play was first suspended, then bogeyed the hole once play resumed two hours later. "So I bogeyed my first hole coming out of the delay, wasn't in a great spot and was able to make a birdie quickly right after to sort of settle the ship," said Schauffele, who then shot 5-under 30 on the back nine. "So yeah, I was happy with how I finished."

Ortiz, meanwhile, finds himself well within striking distance of medal contention heading into the weekend. "I've learned that it's much easier from the fairway," he said, noting the difficulty of the thick rough. "I think when you're in the fairway you're able to be aggressive with the greens being so soft and the greens being this perfect it's great to once you start getting the right reads, it's easy to make putts. I feel like I'm in good position and I like where I stand."

Among those moving into contention include Irish teammates Shane Lowry and Rory McIlroy, whose rounds of 65 and 66 put them at 7-under-par 135, catching Jazz Janewattanond of Thailand (71).

Now it's a matter of waiting for the second round to conclude before resuming as intended ... provided, that is, the weather doesn't further disrupt the schedule as it has the first two days.

## Other Notes/Quotes

**Simone Biles obviously has been in the news after withdrawing to focus on her mental health, and several players have been asked whether they can understand what she is dealing with. Responses included:**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** "Yeah, I mean it's huge, especially what's going on today and I think over the past year and a half since really COVID started and not just COVID but everything else in the world, all these movements. For me, it's being able to separate myself from the golf course. You guys all you guys care about is what I do on the golf course and how I play, but there's other things that I got to separate myself go hang out with my girlfriend, hang out with our dog and just have fun. That's what a lot of these veterans that I've noticed especially I look at a guy like Rory, Webb Simpson, they understand what's important in their life and they have families now, they have got things to worry about other than the golf course and sometimes the weight of especially what we do for such a long period of time on the golf course, it can get to people and I think people need to be aware of it, what's going on, absolutely."

**RORY MCILROY:** "A hundred percent. So, I live in the United States and anything that came on the TV NBC or commercials about the Olympics, it was Simone Biles, it was Simone Biles Olympics, right? So, to have the weight of, what is it, total six million people combined in the island of Ireland. You got 300 whatever million, so the weight on her shoulders is massive. And just as I thought Naomi Osaka was right to do what she did at the French Open and take that time off and get herself in the right place, I a hundred percent agree with what Simone is doing as well. I mean you have to put yourself in the best position physically and mentally and to be at your best and if you don't feel like you're at that or you're in that position then you're going to have to make those decisions and but I'm certainly very impressed with, especially those two women to do what they did and put themselves first."

**Xander Schauffele's father was an outstanding athlete and was an Olympic hopeful as a decathlete until an accident derailed his hopes. Xander was asked about his father's reaction to him competing in the Olympics.**

**XANDER SCHAUFFELE:** "Yeah, he was, he wants to always make sure this is written correctly he was a decathlete hopeful. His accident occurred on his way to the training center in Japan. So he was supposed to make the team, but who knows. He obviously didn't make the team, but we can joke about that now, so far

removed from the accident. But I think I haven't really talked a lot about him since we came here. He is my swing coach and he's a goofy guy when he's on grounds and we like to have a good time, but I really do think if there was an open ceremony, opening ceremony that he could have been a part of and walked, I think maybe he would have gotten emotional, just because it was a dream of his for so long, he put all his eggs in one basket for such a long time and it got taken away from him and he's learned how to deal with that situation. But I'm trying to empathize with what he's done, if I got in an accident and lost an arm or a leg, which can happen any day, and I wasn't able to play golf anymore I would be in the same boat as him. So you kind of have to figure a way around and I think being here, being on the golf course, maybe is not, I don't know, for him as special as if he was at the opening ceremony or on the track at a track and field, I think maybe, maybe if we went there if we were able to go there -- hopefully I can qualify for another Olympics so he can experience that and I think that would mean a lot to him."

**Even with the unique circumstances of these Olympic Games, there's no denying it is different than a regular tournament.** To this point, Collin Morikawa of the USA said, "It's just so special. Rory (McIlroy of Ireland) and I were walking a few holes ago towards the end and he asked if I had watched the Olympics growing up and you do, but you watch a lot of the prime-time sports, the swimming, the gymnastics all that stuff because it comes on at night. But to finally call yourself an Olympian and I think it will probably hit me once the tournament is over, no one can take that away from you. You see so many other athletes and so many other sports and before golf was in it four years ago you never thought that you could become an Olympian, but when you have that title of an Olympian it just puts your ... whether it changes our career or not put that aside, it just changes who you are I think because you've reached a peak for so many other sports to have that title amongst what else you do in the golf world is really special."

And McIlroy, who initially gave the impression he wasn't really excited about the Olympics, said, "Yeah and it's funny, when you sort of approach tournaments like that, it's funny how you end up playing some of your best golf. Sometimes you can want things too much and then other times you're sort of -- but I think I said this yesterday -- once I've been here and I've gotten the -- I never obviously never competed in an Olympic Games, I watched them from a far, but I said this yesterday, being a part of something that's completely different and bigger than me and even our sport in general, that's a pretty cool thing. So, I didn't know if this was going to be my only Olympics that I play or whatever and I'm already looking forward to Paris."

**Sometimes the same old questions can become a bit much, even for someone who was a practicing Buddhist monk.** Following a rather frustrating round of par 71 that included one birdie and one bogey, contender Jazz Janewattananond of Thailand was asked whether that experience helped during a round like Friday's. "I mean, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work," he said. "When it works, it's great. Somehow, when it doesn't work you can try anything on the golf course when you have a bad day you almost can't fix it, you just have to accept it and just try to play with it and try to finish it and try to make yourself happy. Because sometimes you give too much importance to golf and you forgot why you're doing this for a living, why you started, because it's fun. It's actually not a job when you started it but now sometimes some people just take it too seriously."

He was then asked why he went to the Buddhist Temple as a monk. That's when the frustration momentarily crept in.

"Can you give him the memo?" he said. "It's like been asked every day. It's like a culture thing."

He then went on to explain what he learned: "I think the biggest thing I learned is to take yourself back away from the situation and look in from the outside. Like if I was playing and I just talk myself and I look at myself playing, like what am I doing wrong, how can I fix it, rather than there and try and look at yourself, it's just different."

**One of the most visible uniform adjustments this week is actually the lack of one standard piece: a cap.**

While Ondrej Lieser of Czechoslovakia regularly plays without a cap as he is doing so this week, it's definitely not the norm for Rory McIlroy of Ireland. But there's a simple explanation for his decision.

"My head is so small that I have to get Nike to make me custom hats," he told PGATOUR.com. "So, whenever I'm in a team event and the hats aren't custom, they're all too big."

If we need further proof, consider a 2016 tweet McIlroy sent out in response to a question about not wearing a cap in the Ryder Cup: "I've a pea head and the hats were way too big for me!"

**On Thursday, Sepp Straka's background came to light as he took the lead with a men's Olympic record-tying round of 63:** born in Austria to an American mother and Austrian father, moved with his family to Valdosta, Georgia, at age 14 to be closer to his mother's family, attended the University of Georgia, and definitely still feels a deep connection to Austria.

So on Friday, the topic of national pride shifted to a different sort of story with Rory Sabbatini, who moved into contention bearing the Slovakian flag. Sabbatini was born and raised in South Africa, though along the way he gained a passport from the United Kingdom and held dual citizenship in the United States. His Slovakian connection is through his wife, Martina, who is caddying for him this week. And in 2019, Sabbatini officially changed his citizenship.

He says the idea came from his wife's cousin, who is president of the Slovak Golf Association. As Sabbatini explained, "The whole principle about me getting my Slovak citizenship and representing Slovakia is to try and generate interest among the junior golfers and to create future generations of Slovak golfers. The support has been fantastic and so hopefully I'll give them something to cheer about this weekend and inspire a few new golfers and maybe some desire to be future Olympians in the young girls and boys in Slovakia."

Sabbatini has thoroughly enjoyed the experience and connecting with the country's Olympians. "Oh, it's fantastic," he said. "It's been a great environment to be around all the Slovak athletes and the Olympic team and they have been very hospitable and welcoming and we have had a lot of fun in the team room. It was a good day for Slovakia yesterday getting the gold in skeet shooting and a new world record for Slovakia. So sad we could not be there to celebrate with her, but we're there in spirit. But we're out here to do our job and hopefully I can put two good rounds together and give them something to cheer about on the weekend."