

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 6, 2023

**CONTACT:**

Doug Milne, PGA TOUR Communications

904-614-0657

[dougmilne@pgatourhq.com](mailto:dougmilne@pgatourhq.com)



**Following Runner-Up Honors at Q-School in 2022, Wes Short, Jr. Grabs Final Stage Lead After Second Round**

*Three players trail by one stroke, including PGA TOUR Veteran, Daniel Chopra*

**Scottsdale, Arizona** – A year removed from his runner-up finish to Richard Green in the Final Stage of the PGA TOUR Champions Qualifying Tournament at TPC Scottsdale, Wes Short, Jr. birdied four of his last five holes to post an 8-under 63 and vault himself into the lead at 12-under 130.

“With the exception of two 3-woods, I feel like I hit the ball really well today,” 60-year-old Wes Short, Jr. said. “I’ve been working hard with my teacher for the last month, and we both agree that I seem to be in a really good position with my game. Plus, it seems like I must really like this golf course after my finish here last year.”

Among 43 top-10 finishes in 237 PGA TOUR Champions starts were a pair of victories, most recently at the 2019 Shaw Charity Classic. His lone victory in 94 PGA TOUR starts came at the 2005 Michelin Championship.

After “not touching a club” for the better part of the last six months, first-round co-leader Daniel Chopra followed a 7-under 64 in round one with a 4-under 67 in Wednesday’s second round. At 11-under 131, he sits T2 with Cameron Percy and Shane Bertsch.

The two others with whom Chopra shared the first-round lead, Micah Rudolsky and amateur Brian Hoops are 7-under (T10) and 6-under (T12), respectively.

“I was so much more comfortable today,” said Sweden’s Daniel Chopra. “Once I started making the putts I knew I should be making, I settled. To this day, from six feet and in, I still feel like I’m one of the best putters in the world. So, making those gave me better confidence.”

Following back-to-back eagles on Nos. 9 and 10, two par-5s, to reach 14-under par, Chopra felt the need to collect himself.

“Mentally, that felt like information overload for me,” Chopra explained. “I knew I was a good player who hadn’t played in a long time, but I didn’t expect it to be this good that quickly. It distracted me a little, to be honest. I felt like I was getting ahead of myself.”

A “safe-play birdie” at No. 17 brought the two-time PGA TOUR winner back to a zone with which he found comfort.

“More than anything, it’s important for me to do well when it matters to qualify,” Chopra said. “I’d love to be leading by eight shots, but that’s not most important to me. It would mean more to be coming down the stretch feeling like I needed to par the last two holes....and, then doing it. That would do more for me playing on PGA TOUR Champions than just cruising.”

After opening with a 1-under 70 Tuesday, Eric Axley played his first seven holes in round two in 8-under par. Beginning his round on No. 10, the 49-year-old followed an eagle with six consecutive birdies. With pars on his eighth and ninth holes (Nos. 17 and 18), the Tennessee native made the turn at 8-under 28.

“Once I eagled No. 10, it seemed like the birdies weren’t much more than tap-ins,” Eric Axley said. “I think I had it inside three feet on each of my first eight holes, except the par-3 16<sup>th</sup>. There, I had 192 yards and hit it to six feet...but still made it. So, everything just felt really comfortable down that stretch of holes.”

Axley’s 28 ties the low nine-hole score on PGA TOUR Champions in 2023 with Pádraig Harrington (Round 3, DICK’s Sporting Goods Open, Nos. 10-18). A quadruple bogey at the par-3 third hole resulted in a 7-under 64, good for T7 at 8-under 134.

“I hit a weird tee shot on No. 3 that ended up in a bad spot,” Axley said. “I couldn’t get it on the green from where I was, so I ended up having a bogey putt from 20 feet. I ran that by three feet, then ran it by three feet coming back. So, that was a 4-putt. It was like getting punched in the stomach when you aren’t prepared for it. But, I did bounce back somewhat with three more straight birdies on 5, 6 and 7. So, that helped.”

En route to an even-par 71, 55-year-old Tim Bogue aced the par-3 13<sup>th</sup> from 173 yards. The California native and longshoreman by trade since 1999 sits T57 through 36 holes at 1-over 143. Credit for the second hole-in-one of the day belongs to Ted Purdy, who achieved the feat at the par-3 16<sup>th</sup> from 191 yards. After a 2-under 69, Purdy heads into Thursday’s third round T62 at 2-over 144.

Major League Baseball Hall of Famer John Smoltz followed an opening-round 9-over 80 with a 5-over 76.

At the conclusion of the four rounds, the top-5 finishers will be fully exempt into all open, full-field events for PGA TOUR Champions in the 2024 season. In addition, players finishing sixth through 30th will be eligible to apply for PGA TOUR Champions Associate Membership for the 2024 season, affording them the opportunity to enter 2024 PGA TOUR Champions weekly event qualifiers.

This year’s field stands as one of the strongest in event history, as 20 players have combined for 46 combined titles between the PGA TOUR (34) and PGA TOUR Champions (12).

Wednesday’s weather featured sunny skies, a high of 80 degrees and a SE wind 4-8 mph.

Tee times for Thursday’s third round will run from 8:30 – 10:42 a.m. MT off Nos. 1 and 10 at TPC Scottsdale (Champions).

**Quick Links:** [Leaderboard](#) | [Third-Round Tee Times](#)

### **About PGA TOUR Champions**

PGA TOUR Champions is a membership organization of professional golfers aged 50 and older, including 35 members of the World Golf Hall of Fame. The Tour’s mission is to provide financial opportunities for its players, entertain and inspire its fans, deliver substantial value to its partners, create outlets for volunteers to give back and generate significant charitable and economic impact in tournament communities. Follow PGA TOUR Champions online at [PGATOUR.com](https://www.pgatour.com), on [Facebook](#), on [Twitter](#) (@ChampionsTour), on [Instagram](#) (@pgatourchampions) and on [TikTok](#) (pgatourchampions).

All events are televised in the United States on Golf Channel, the exclusive cable-television partner of PGA TOUR Champions. Internationally, PGA TOUR Champions coverage is available in more than 170 countries and territories via 22 media partners.