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Dan Olsen Sets 36-Hole Record, Grabs Lead at the Senior PGA Professional Championship

By John Dever & Pat Kravitz
PGA of America

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (Oct. 26, 2018) - Dan Olsen's Senior PGA Professional Championship debut came last year at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he carded a first-round 78. From there, it was a battle just to make the cut, and he would ultimately finish in a tie for 55th.

His second appearance is shaping up to tell a different story. A PGA Assistant Professional at Quail Creek Country Club in Robinson, Illinois, Olsen holds the 36-hole advantage at 13-under 131 in the 264-player field at PGA Golf Club. In close pursuit are Bob Sowards of Dublin, Ohio, and Omar Uresti of Austin, Texas, at 12 and 11-under, respectively. Olsen's 131 establishes a new Championship low score through two rounds, eclipsing the record set by Reed Hughes in 2006 (134).

"My shot quality is higher than last year," said Olsen, who followed his Thursday 64 with a second-round, 5-under 67. "I'm driving the ball better. If you drive it well, golf's easy. You don't need the yardage book as much. You don't need practice rounds as much. If you drive it poorly, that's when you need to be on top of what you're doing."

Olsen, who started on the back side of the Wanamaker Course, totaled seven birdies on Friday, bumping his total to 16 through two rounds. Like Thursday, Olsen took advantage of the par 5s, birdieing three of the four for a second consecutive day. Miscues off the tee on holes 3 and 5 resulted in Olsen's two bogeys for the round. But, just as he did in round one, he closed with birdies on two of his final three holes.

“That will give me some momentum going into the weekend, which you need,” said Olsen. “Bob and Omar played well again. I’ve tried to play from the center of the green into the pin, so I’ve had some nice 10, 12, 15-foot looks. I need to get my score into the 20s.

“I have procedural activities for every shot that are simple. I don’t want to change what I’m doing. The dumber you are, the more it helps you and I should be really good in that category.”

Despite battling windier conditions on Friday, Sowards appeared destined for a perch atop the Championship’s second-round leaderboard until he double-bogeyed the Wanamaker’s par-3 17th hole. His 4-under, 68 resulted in a two-day total of 132.

Sowards’ blemish on No. 17 was his first of the Championship, but by then, he’d already carded an eagle and 12 birdies through his initial 34 holes.

Uresti posted four birdies and a single bogey on Friday, a more pedestrian clip than the day prior, when a docile breeze allowed for an “attack mode” mindset and nine corresponding birdies.

Both Uresti and Sowards have much in common, more than they are both playing in their initial Senior PGA Professional Championships. They’re former PGA Cup teammates and are PGA Professional Champions (Sowards in 2004 in his home state of Ohio, Uresti in 2017) that have played in a combined 14 PGAs. Both have extensive PGA Tour experience to lean on.

Two-time champion Mike San Filippo of Hobe Sound, Florida, also finds himself within shouting distance of Olsen and is alone in fourth place after a 67-68-135 start. In total, 96 players advanced to Saturday’s third round, following a cut to the low 90 scorers and ties. Sunday’s final round will be trimmed to the low 70 scorers and ties.

The Senior PGA Professional Championship is supported by GolfAdvisor.com and John Deere.

The low 35 scorers earn a berth in the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, May 23-26, 2019, at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, New York.

The top eight finishers, including ties, will be exempt into the 2019 Senior PGA Professional Championship. The top five finishers earn a berth into the final stage of the 2018 PGA Tour Champions National Qualifying Tournament Final Stage, Nov. 27-30, at TPC Tampa Bay in Lutz, Florida.

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