



2018 SENIOR PGA PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP | OCTOBER 25-28 | PGA GOLF CLUB | PORT ST. LUCIE, FLA.

Olsen, Sowards, Uresti share the 54-hole lead in the Senior PGA Professional Championship

By Pat Kravitz
PGA of America

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (Oct. 27, 2018) - Through the first two rounds of the 30th Senior PGA Professional Championship at PGA Golf Club, Dan Olsen, Bob Sowards and Omar Uresti carded a combined six bogeys or worse.

The three exceeded that total by the Wanamaker Course's 12th hole on Saturday alone.

Despite the struggles, each player is in position to capture a victory, as they share the lead at 13-under 203 heading into Sunday's final round.

The solo 36-hole leader Olsen notched a birdie at the second hole to reach 14-under early, but he failed to gain momentum. Bogeys at holes 4 and 8, plus a double-bogey at No. 9, had Olsen playing from behind heading into the back nine. But three birdies on the four par 5s provided the necessary spark for Olsen to keep his name at the top of the leaderboard. He followed rounds of 64 and 67 with an even-par 72.

"All three of us were nasty today - it was tough," said Olsen, a PGA Assistant Professional at Quail Creek Country Club in Robinson, Illinois. "I missed a couple close putts, but I still hit some nice shots. I drove it great on the par 5s. My bounce back is good. But I have to be better tomorrow."

On Sunday, Olsen will try to become the first champion to hold at least a share of the lead after each round since Frank Esposito Jr. did so in 2014 at PGA Golf Club.

Uresti, who won the 2017 PGA Professional Championship, played steady on the front complemented by a pair of 40-foot birdies at holes 2 and 8, and he made the turn holding a share of the lead, along with Sowards, at 13-under. Both players matched each other's bogey and birdie at holes 11 and 15, but neither could separate from the pack over the final three holes.

"I hit a lot of close shots to 10-12 feet and had trouble reading the putts," said Uresti, a PGA Life Member from Austin, Texas, who has posted scores of 64-69-70. "We grinded it out on the back nine. We all had opportunities but just couldn't capitalize. These guys are going to be tough. All three of us are going to come out firing."

The 2004 PGA Professional champion, Sowards has one eagle, 18 birdies and only one bogey through 54 holes at PGA Golf Club. The problem? He has also mixed in three double-bogeys. Sowards strung together back-to-back birdies two separate times through his first six holes, and he added a birdie on the par-4 8th. But a double on holes 4 and 9 derailed any momentum Sowards built. His third-round 71 comes after a 64 and 68.

"I felt like I could've had a decent lead, but I hit two really bad shots and made doubles," said Sowards, who's a PGA Director of Instruction at Kinsale Golf & Fitness Club in Powell, Ohio. "I'm pretty fortunate to be tied for the lead. I'm comfortable on the golf course. I've put myself in a pretty good position, even though I gave away a few shots today."

Several players charged up the leaderboard on Saturday, led by Brad Lardon, who fired a 5-under 67 to position himself in a tie for fourth place. Joining Lardon at 9-under 207 are Mark Tucker (68-68-71) and Mike San Filippo (67-68-72)

Sunday's final round will feature 78 players, as the field was trimmed to the low 70 scorers and ties following 54 holes.

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, provided they have entered.

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