

Heeding advice pays off as Michael Walton shoots 68 to tie for lead



Michael Walton

Michael Walton was seven shots behind leader Tyler Terry after two rounds of the FWJGA Boys City Junior Golf Championship, but he was heading to his home course at Mira Vista C.C. for Wednesday's third round and believed he had a chance make up some ground. He said his dad Mark reminded him that he was playing his home course, so to go have fun. Michael also listened to advice from long-time successful amateur John Grace that every shot counts toward winning. Michael added those notes to his many that he has scribbled on his golf bag, head covers, hat or anywhere else he might look at them for guidance.

So, taking it one shot at a time, the Trinity Valley graduate who's headed for TCU, trimmed three strokes off par over the almost 6,600-yard course and tied Tyler for the lead at 213. Tyler, 18, of Hurst, said he had two three putts, carded a double bogey in his struggle to finish with a 73. He and Michael are two shots ahead of Luke Neeley (73), Colby Webb (74) and Andy Ariens (74) going into Thursday's final round at Colonial Country Club. The Fort Worth Junior Golf Association and Colonial are celebrating their 75th year of existence this year. Colonial founder Marvin Leonard was responsible for starting the free boys tournament.

Michael said his one-shot-at-a-time method worked until his last putt when he missed a 1-footer and bogeyed the par-5 11th. "It happened and it's a learning lesson," he said.

The Championship Flight started Wednesday morning with a shotgun start on the back nine at Mira Vista and Michael teed off on the par-3 12th. He parred that, but bogeyed the par-4 14th. "Then I heard the Big Man tell me "one shot at a time." He listened as he carded a 33-35. He also had fun. "We had a blast all day," he said of his playing partners Colin Wickman and Jeremy Salas. Wickman finished with a 79 and 224, which was where the cut was made for the final round. Seventeen made the cut.

Michael is looking forward to Colonial, though he struggled on the greens last year. "I love Colonial," he said.

Tyler, 18, of Hurst said after his 75 that he was "grinding a lot." Besides his three-putts, he also had two balls plug in sand traps. He said he felt no added pressure after leading the second round. "I'm enjoying it."

Colby, 18, of Burseson shot a 74 even though he carded a double bogey on the ninth. Although he was able to hold his round together, he said it didn't help that "I missed a lot of birdie putts." Colby said he needs to concentrate more at Colonial and "minimize my mistakes."

Andy, 18, of Mansfield said he played "pretty well" in carding his 73, but an out-of-bounds shot led to a double-bogey on the par-5 11th. "I hit three or four bad shots. But I was able to scrape it around." He said he has played Colonial about five times and "I know it pretty well. I like my chances. I'm in a good spot."

Four shots behind the three tied for second are Sean Walsh, 17, of Keller and Mack Paulson, 16, of Keller.