

## Lead turns slippery on fast greens



First-round Luke Neeley watches his first drive of the day go out of bounds at Ridglea C.C. He shot a 76 to fall behind by three shots after 36 holes of the 72-hole tournament



Eric Valenzuela

Golfers were presented with challenging, quick greens in the second round of the 2012 FWJGA Boys City Junior Golf Championship Tuesday, July 17, at Ridglea Country Club in Fort Worth, resulting in a lead change.

Eric Valenzuela, 16, took the lead from Luke Neeley with an even-par 71 and a 143 total. He carded three birdies during his round while Neeley got off to a shaky start by driving his first tee shot out of bounds on the No. 1 par-5 hole and finished with a 76 for a 146 total. Valenzuela later dropped out of the tournament after he and officials realized he was from outside the area of towns players must be from to be eligible.

Tied for second place only a shot behind Valenzuela as the Championship Flight heads to Mira Vista C.C. for Wednesday's third round were Sean Walsh, 18, and Javier Manrique, who shot a 1-under 70, the day's best score. Walsh posted his second consecutive 72.

"I played good today and putted amazing," Valenzuela said. "I was comfortable with the course and the Bermuda, and I didn't miss a lot of fairways and that helps."

Luke Neeley, who opened with a 70 at Meadowbrook G.C., said he struggled with his putting en route to his 76. "The thing that held me back was putting. I'm in a transition phase with a new putter. I struggled a lot more today than yesterday with the putter and the complexity of the greens. I know I may have lost the lead, but I hope to make a move tomorrow after some work tonight on the putting green."

Most of the players were surprised by the speed of the greens. "It's an adjustment coming from Meadowbrook to here," Walsh said. "These greens are very fast and being below the hole is a definite necessity."

The Division I was separated into the Championship and First flights and Division II was divided into the

Second and Third flights. The boys who shot 154 or lower made the Championship Flight. That left three players -- Colin Wickman, 18, Justin Poe, 18, and Zachery Cole, 14-- tied for the lead at 155. Whitman, a graduate of Paschal, was a first team All-District selection and an Academic All-State second team.

The fourth through 14th flight are playing single-elimination match play until the final day when the final four will switch to stroke play. In the 9-hole 12-13-year-old division, they also are continuing with match play, but only the final two will contest it out on the final day.