

First-round leader moves to front again after third round of boys championship



Although Zack Howe, three shots behind leader Andrew Hudson and one behind Jorge Morillo, managed to escape three-putting a green at Shady Oaks on Wednesday, he showed the frustration that many in the field felt on the fast and deceptive greens.



Andrew Hudson

A surprising cool front moved through the area Wednesday morning, but that's not the reason scores also cooled in the third round of the Fort Worth Boys City Junior Golf Championship. The Shady Oaks Country Club's fast and deceptive greens were deemed the culprit for the rising scores.

However, first-round leader Andrew Hudson rallied for a 2-under-par 34 on the back nine for a 2-over 73 and became the front-runner again with a three-day 220 total and a two-shot lead heading into the final round Thursday at Colonial Country Club. He had led after the first round with a 70, but fell out of the lead after a 77 at Ridglea Country Club North.

Alone in second is Jorge Morillo, 16 of Southlake. Morillo, who attends Carroll High and was a member of the 2012-13 third place state team, shot a 73 and moved into second alone at 222. Behind him is Zach Howe, 15, of Mansfield and who posted a 76. Howe was one of the few (maybe the only) players who didn't three-putt a green. A shot behind him are Hayden Springer, 16, of Trophy Club, who shot a 78 despite two double-bogeys and a triple bogey on the front nine, and William Mullins, 17, of Mansfield and who turned in the day's best score of 72.

Hudson witnessed second-round leader and playing partner Matt Adler, 16, of Argyle struggle mightily with keeping the ball in the fairways and figuring out the greens. "I can't tell you how many three-putts I had," Adler said after finishing with an 88, a day after shooting a 74 at tough Ridglea C.C. North. "It's a big disappointment, but what can you do?"

Hudson, who hit his driver only twice, said he struggled with his putting on the front nine when he carded four three-putt bogeys. However, he rallied on the back and closed with a 2-under 34 with no bogeys. By bagging his driver in favor of hybrids, he did what he believed to be the best method of attacking Shady Oaks -- keeping the ball in the fairway and avoiding hazards and bunkers that could have been reached with his driver.

Even though he was 4-over on the front, he believed he had passed the most difficult stretch of holes without a major disaster and made his run on the back. Though he clipped two shots off par on the back, he missed putts on Nos. 16 and 17 within the 10-foot range that could have added even more distance from his challengers. But he isn't complaining and is looking forward to playing Colonial, which also puts a premium on keeping the tee shots in the fairways. "The greens are fast there, too, but not as fast as these," he said. Hudson was a three-time all-state selection while helping lead Southwest Christian High School's golf team to three 4A TAPPS State Championships.

Howe said he was able to lag most of his putts within two to three feet of the hole, which helped him dodge a three-putt. His driving was accurate, too, but he said he was hooking his irons too much coming into the greens and will need to iron out that problem. Unlike Hudson, Howe hit his driver on every hole (except par-3s) except one. "I'm accurate with my driver," he said. He also is confident in his short game and he expects to improve considerably from last year when he shot an 89 at Colonial in the final round.

"I've learned not to give up on myself (since last year) when I get 5 or 6 over par. I've learned to keep fighting," he said.

Mullins, 17, of Mansfield made a big leap from the 16th spot after his 72. He's accustomed to success, too, as he is the 15-4A district champ while playing for Mansfield Legacy last season. He rebounded after posting an 80 at Ridglea.

Springer said he hit the ball everywhere on the front nine en route to his 44. But he rallied by birding both par 5s and the par-4 17th on the back for a 2-under 34. "I was just trying to stabilize (myself)," he said after the front nine. "I figured shooting 9-over probably wouldn't get me in Colonial."

Andrew Spear, 16, of Flower Mound has a shot lead in the First Flight at 231 after a 75 at Shady Oaks C.C. Leading the Second Flight is Turner MacLean, 16, of Fort Worth and an All-Southwest Preparatory Conference from Fort Worth Country Day. He shot a 71 at Mira Vista C.C. for a 224 total. Tied for the lead at 244s in the Third Flight are Russell Schuljak, 16, of Mansfield and Nick Cornelius. 18, of Arlington. Schuljak shot a 79 and Cornelius a 77 at Mira Vista.