



50TH PGA PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Crosswater and Meadows Golf Courses
Sunriver Resort | Sunriver, Oregon
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ROD PERRY SEIZES LEAD AFTER WILD THIRD-ROUND SCRAMBLE AT 50TH PGA PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

By Bob Denney
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SUNRIVER, ORE. (June 20, 2017) – Defending Champion Rich Berberian Jr. elected to slash his way free of fescue Tuesday afternoon at Crosswater Club, and his ill-timed decision opened the door wide for a race to the finish in the 50th PGA Professional Championship presented by Club Car, Mercedes-Benz and OMEGA.

Rod Perry of Port Orange, Florida, who won in 2013 when the national championship was last played at Crosswater, stepped up to grab the lead with a 2-under-par 70 and three-day total of 208. He owns a three-stroke edge over Matt Dobyms of Glen Head, New York, who recorded a 71, heading into Wednesday’s final round.

Berberian, the PGA Director of Instruction at Vesper Country Club in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts, finished with a 78, and is seven strokes behind Perry. Berberian saw an opportunity to maintain control fade quickly with a bogey-quadruple bogey-bogey stretch from the seventh and ninth holes.

Berberian took six strokes to free his ball from tall fescue left of the 221-yard, par-3 eighth hole, and followed by rolling in a six-foot putt.

It was a stunning reversal reminiscent of his triple-bogey on the 12th hole of last year’s final round. Berberian found a way to rally in then, but his task tomorrow will be taller thanks to a loaded leaderboard.

Perry and Dobyms occupy that leaderboard’s top two spots, as each played bogey-free golf in breezier conditions than the field experienced the first two days of the Championship.

Perry provided himself a bit of separation, as he sank a 22-foot birdie putt on 18 to increase his lead to three.

“I had a hard time finding the right lines on the first part of the round. And then finally, the last one on 18, I finally got it,” said Perry before continuing. “Obviously, I have great memories here from a few years ago. There’s no humidity here, its crisp and it’s June. I did not break a sweat today. I feel energized. I honestly feel like I could go out and play another round right now.”

A pair of coaches, Jamie Broce (75), who has coached the University of Toledo men’s golf team the past five seasons, and Mike Small (70) of the University of Illinois, are tied for third at 212. They are four back.

Dobyms, who will take aim on what would be his third PGA Professional Championship on Wednesday (he won in 2012 and ’15), found himself in a three-shot hole until Berberian’s unsettled situation on the eighth hole changed the equation.

“It’s really nice to be in the mix,” said Dobyms. “The golf course here (Crosswater) is not one that sets up that great for me, so I am really happy to be in the conversation for tomorrow.”

With Berberian's tumble, Dobyns found himself only a shot back of Perry, who parred his first 10 holes of the afternoon before breaking the string with a birdie on the 561-yard, par-5 11th.

From there, neither Perry nor Dobyns made a mistake, with Perry's backside birdies providing the three-stroke margin.

"Obviously I'm in the position I'd like to be in," said Perry, who was also the 54-hole leader in 2013. "All of the guys behind me are accomplished players, and hopefully we all have great rounds tomorrow, but certainly those guys on the leaderboard, somebody could have a really solid round, 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-under par (tomorrow). That is not unheard of. I know I am going to have to keep going forward and just tell myself it is all about the golf. All these other intangibles, winning the (Championship), and everything else that comes with it have to be out of my mind."

There are 71 players that made the 54-hole cut of 5-over-par, 220 to advance to Wednesday's final round.

The low 20 scorers following Wednesday's final round earn a berth in the 99th PGA Championship, Aug. 10-13, at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, North Carolina.

NOTES: Former Champions Scott Hebert of Traverse City, Michigan, and Jeff Roth of Farmington, New Mexico, scrambled their way to make the 54-hole cut. Hebert, who won in 2008, hit only seven greens on his way to a 1-over-par 73, but it was enough to earn a final-round berth at 3-over-par 290. He has played the weekend nine times in his previous 11 appearances. Roth rolled home a five-foot par putt on the 18th green to salvage a 76 and make the cut on the number ... For the third consecutive year, Karen Paolozzi of Atlanta, made it to the final round with a three-day total of 4-over-par, 219. "When I came to this event -- or any event -- it's my goal to play all four rounds and I'm happy to have done that here," said Paolozzi, who will be competing next week in the KPMGA Women's PGA Championship.

