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Three tied for Dogwood lead entering final round

There are 15 players within five shots of the lead at the 51st Dogwood Invitational, meaning Saturday could be one of the most frenetic finishes in the event's long and storied history.

"It will come down to who plays the best in one round to win the tournament," said 2015 champion Dawson Armstrong, one of the three players who share the third-round lead at 15-under 201.

Armstrong, a senior at Lipscomb University, shot a 70 on Friday and is tied for the lead with Seton Hall graduate Lloyd Go and Campbell University senior Gaston Bertinotti, who each shot 67.

Tied for fourth at 14-under 202 is Georgia Tech's Luke Schniederjans, Georgia's Spencer Ralston and Duke's Chandler Eaton. Tied at 13-under 203 is first-round leader Bryson Nimmer of Clemson and Guilford golf coach Justin Tereshko, who won the North Carolina Amateur two weeks ago.

Alone at 12-under is Georgia Tech's Andy Ogletree. The group tied at 11-under includes Mississippi State signee Austin Fulton, Auburn's Jacob Solomon, Georgia Southern's Steven Fisk, Purdue's Timothy Hildebrand and defending champion Charles Huntzinger of Penn State.

The tournament will conclude on Saturday. Play will begin at 8:30 a.m., with players competing in twosomes and starting on the first and tenth tees.

Armstrong played most of his round in the rain. He bogeyed the opening hole for the second day in a row and grinded his way through a 70.

"Any golf course can turn hard when it starts raining," Armstrong said. "It was a battle. I fought hard at the end. It was probably the worst ball-striking round I've had all summer. I've got to tighten up a few things and hopefully tomorrow will be a victorious day."

Bertinotti bogeyed the third hole and didn't make his first birdie until No. 9. That's when he told his caddie that it was go-time. He ran off three straight birdies at 11, 12 and 13 and made an eagle on the 14th hole. From there the rain intensified and his chances were reduced.

"I didn't think I was going to shoot 5-under," Bertinotti said. "That birdie (at No. 9) helped me mentally. I thought I'd be even par, just hang in there. But I knew the people behind me, it would be tough for them to go low today."

Go had seven birdies and two bogeys on his card. It was his third straight day to shoot 67.

Ralston's 66 was the second-best score posted on Friday. He did not have a bogey and ran off four consecutive birdies from No. 13-16.

"The putter got hot," Ralston said. "I switched back to a putter I had in high school (Scotty Cameron GOLO) and decided to go with it. It feels good. I knew I had to make up a couple shots and this helps out a lot."

Huntzinger went through a half-dozen towels during his 67 and got an assist from his mom for keeping him well-supplied. He started on the back and opened with a 32, thanks to a hole-out for birdie on the 14th hole. Only a bogey at the par-3 sixth hole sullied his round.

"The front nine everything was good, mostly putting," he said. "I left five right in the jar. Then the rain came and it was a grind. You have to keep your grips dry, keep sand off your clubs, grass .. You just have to deal with it."

The day's low score belonged to Charles Kim of Arkansas, who opened with a 30 and shot 65. Kim had seven birdies and a bogey on his first nine and birdied two of three holes to open the second nine. He is tied for 15th at 206.

"Everything was going my way," Kim said. "The putts were pretty simple. It was just really good. I've been playing well, I just haven't scored on any of the holes you have to make birdie on. Other than that, I've been putting well all week."

About The Dogwood Invitational

The Dogwood Invitational is an elite amateur golf championship established to promote the game of amateur golf and support junior golf organizations. Held at Druid Hills Golf Club in Atlanta, Georgia, the tournament is an internationally ranked top amateur golf event that began in 1941. The tournament is run by The Dogwood Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit, and proceeds from sponsorships are directed to the Georgia Junior Golf Association and Druid Hills Golf Club Foundation. Find out more at www.thedogwood.com.

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