**Trio Posts 68 to Share First-Round Lead at C.C. of Detroit**

By David Shefter, USGA

**What Happened**

Scott Almquist may have a new outlook on the value of a practice round. With Friday afternoon’s thunderstorm that dumped a little more than 1¼ inches of rain at the Country Club of Detroit, the 56-year-old from Wallace, Idaho, didn’t get much of a look at the venue hosting the 66th U.S. Senior Amateur Championship.

“I got to play one hole and they called it,” said Almquist. “So I was kind of blind all day, which maybe was good for me.”

Despite a few misreads, Almquist, who is competing in his first USGA championship since the 2010 U.S. Mid-Amateur, carded a 4-under-par 68 to share the first-round lead on a hot and muggy Saturday when temperatures reached into the low 90s with a Heat Index as high as 99.

Chip Lutz, of Reading, Pa., the 2015 U.S. Senior Amateur champion, and Jeff Knox, of Augusta, Ga., also fired 68s, the latter a bogey-free performance.

Six players finished at 3-under 69, including 1996 U.S. Amateur Public Links champion Tim Hogarth, of Northridge, Calif., 2013 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion Michael McCoy, of Des Moines, Iowa, and 2019 U.S. Senior Amateur runner-up Roger Newsom, of Virginia Beach, Va. The group at 2-under 69 included 1997 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion Ken Bakst, of Baiting Hollow, N.Y. Overall, 22 players broke par in Round 1.

Starting on No. 10, Almquist got off to a blistering start with birdies on Nos. 10, 13, 15 and 18 before coming home in even-par 36. His lone bogey was on the 186-yard, par-3 fifth hole.

“I hit the ball good today,” said Almquist. “I only missed one fairway and two greens, so pretty easy day.”

Knox, who hasn’t teed it up in a USGA championship since the 2013 U.S. Mid-Amateur, went out in 4-under 32 before making 10 consecutive pars to finish his round. Two solid par putts on the Country Club of Detroit’s second nine at 12 and 16 kept the momentum going. He rolled in a 15-foot birdie on No. 1, two-putted the par-5 third, holed a downhill, left-to-right breaking putt from 20 feet on No. 7 and another 20-footer on eight.

“I had it rolling [on the first nine,” said Knox, a two-time Georgia State Mid-Amateur champion (2008, 2009) and the winner of the 2016 Crump Cup at Pine Valley. “My game hasn’t changed much in the last 20-25 years. I just haven’t played as many other tournaments as some of these other guys. But I still enjoy the competition.”

Lutz, who was paired with Newsom and Knox (the group combined to shoot 10 under par), closed out his day with birdies on Nos. 17 and 18 after bogeys on 12 and 14 had pushed him back to 2 under for the round.

“I’m going to try and keep my head down and pray for the best,” said Lutz of his mindset for Sunday’s second and final round of stroke play. “I hope there’s some carryover.”

**What’s Next**

The second round of stroke play begins at 7:20 a.m. on Sunday, after which the low 64 scorers advance to match play, which begins on Monday. Should a playoff be necessary to determine the final spots in the match-play bracket, it would take place on Monday morning.

**Notable**

On-site alternate **Donald Burns**, of Jamesville, N.Y, had only a few minutes to get ready for Round 1 after **Eddie Pimentel** failed to show for his scheduled 12:50 p.m. tee time. Burns, the first alternate from the Rochester, N.Y., qualifier, proceeded to card a 74. He arrived on property at 6:15 a.m., but after briefly warming up in the morning, he didn’t hit a shot for several hours until being called to the first tee.

**Paul Simson’s** bid to make match play for a 14th time in this championship is in serious jeopardy after the two-time champion carded a 6-over 78. The 70-year-old Raleigh, N.C., resident owns a 34-10 match-play record in the U.S. Senior Amateur and is 13-0 in the Round of 64.

Defending champion **Bob Royak**, of Alpharetta, Ga., opened with an even-par 72.

The U.S. Senior Amateur gives players the option to walk or ride. The few players who choose to walk employ the services of a caddie. But **Tim Hogarth** chose to walk *and* carry his own bag, something he often does at amateur events.

**Tore Carlson**, of Katonah, N.Y., a national member of the Country Club of Detroit, carded a 77.

[To commemorate **Arnold Palmer’s** 1954 U.S. Amateur victory at the Country Club of Detroit](https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/championships/2021/u-s--senior-amateur/articles/palmer-1954-us-am-win-celebrated-cc-of-detroit.html), his replica Havermeyer Trophy was brought up from Orlando, Fla., by Winnie and Arnold Palmer Foundation board member and former USGA Museum staffer **David Normoyle**. Each player also received a letter from Palmer’s daughter, **Amy Saunders**, and a replica of Palmer’s player badge from the 1954 U.S. Amateur.

**Quotable**

“It’s golf. I’m old enough now to not predict anything, so I just show up and hopefully my body’s good. That’s all I care about.” – **Scott Almquist** after his 4-under 68

“I faced my 7:20 [a.m.] tee time by getting up at 4. If I get up at 5, I’m going to feel like it’s so early. So I get up at 4 and I was so bored, I was ready to go [at 7:20].” – **Jack Hall** after amassing seven birdies against four bogeys in shooting 3-under 69

“You know I’ve been doing this a long time. I’m going to get out of bed and try and eat the same thing and go out there and hit the same shots.” – **Michael McCoy** (3-under 69) on staying in his routine

“I thought it was pretty amazing how well the course drained. The conditions we saw the last two days were pretty much the same as we had today. The [grounds] crew did a fabulous job getting us back in order.” – **Chip Lutz** (4-under 68) on the playing conditions after the course received 1.26 inches of rain on Friday

“Not really. If you start thinking about what you have to shoot and that’s the kiss of death. Just going to go out there [on Sunday] and do the same thing.” – **Jeff Knox** (4-under 68) on his mindset for Sunday’s second round

“It's hot, oh it's hot. You know I enjoy carrying my bag, so I'll do it even on the days, if I'm lucky enough to make it when we play two rounds [of match play], I'll carry both rounds, I'm just used to doing it. It's a flat course, I mean I played in the [U.S.] Senior Open at Omaha [Country Club] and that was up and down a ton of hills, so this is a nice little break to see a nice flat golf course.” – **Tim Hogarth** (3-under 69)

“I was debating whether I should come or not. And a bunch of my friends said you’ve got to go. You’re next up [on the allotment list]. So it worked out.” – **Daniel Burns**, who got into the field at 12:50 p.m. on Saturday when another competitor failed to show for his scheduled time.

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