



Blessings Golf Club, Fayetteville, Arkansas
Par 72, 7550 yards

DAY ONE RECAP – MAY 24, 2019

DEFENDING CHAMPION OKLAHOMA STATE OUT TO EARLY LEAD AFTER DAY ONE OF THE 2019 NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – Defending national champion Oklahoma State leads the field after posting a 2-over-par 290 team total during day one at the 2019 NCAA Division I Men's Golf Championships being played at the Blessings Golf Club.

Looking for the first back-to-back championships since Alabama accomplished the feat in 2013-2014, the Cowboys shook off a rocky start and collectively posted a 3-under-par team total on their final nine holes of the day to find themselves in familiar territory heading into the second round. Sophomore Austin Eckroat led the Cowboys attack by shooting a 3-under 69 on the hot, humid afternoon that greeted the 30 teams and individual qualifiers on Friday.

"I hit really well out there today. I didn't really make any putts or any good par saves but other than that I hit really well," said Eckroat. "It's a tough course. I hit really well which made it a lot easier, but I can see where my mistakes were. I got a few good breaks but it's tough and you have to play well. It's a short break between rounds, so I just have to keep doing the same things that I did today."

Oklahoma State is on top of a jam-packed leaderboard, followed closely by Stanford at 3-over-par, while Auburn and California are both 4-over par. Thirteen teams are within 10 shots of the coveted eighth and final qualifying position that is currently held by Texas at 10-over-par.

Precision with length is key at the Robert Trent Jones Jr. layout where 20 golfers completed the first round with a score of even-par or better on the lengthy 7,550-yard track. California's Collin Morikawa continued his torrid stretch of golf with a tournament-best nine birdies in route to an opening round 5-under-par 67 to stand alone in first place. Pac-12 Conference running mates Chun An Yu of Arizona State and Kyler Dunkle of Utah each posted a 3-under-par 69 to share second place along with Oklahoma State's Eckroat as the trio sits just two shots back of the overnight leader. Stanford's Isaiah Salinda tallied a 2-under-par 70.

"Coming into this week I knew my game was trending in the right direction and it felt good, said Morikawa, the Pac-12 tournament champion. "I heard this course was tough but I'm always up for the challenge. I didn't really make many ups and downs, I kept the ball in play and that's what really matters out here. It's a tough course. If you make one mistake out there it can start to pile up, so you just have

to try to minimize those and keep the ball in play. It's going to come down to my short game. I'm not going to hit the ball as great every day, so I just have to stick to my strengths. It's important out here to know how to hit a shot, this is why we practice.

Finals play consists of three days of stroke play on Friday, May 24 thru Sunday, May 26 (54 holes), after which the top 15 teams and nine individuals not on an advancing team will be determined. That is followed by a final day of 18 holes of stroke play on Monday, May 27 to determine the top eight teams that will advance to match play as well as the 72-hole individual champion. The team national champion will be determined by a match-play format that will consist of quarterfinals and semifinals conducted on Tuesday, May 28, followed by finals on Wednesday, May 29.

The second round of the 2019 NCAA Men's Golf Championship is scheduled to begin at 6:50 a.m. tomorrow morning at the Blessings Golf Club.



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DAY ONE QUOTES – MAY 24, 2019

Colin Morikawa, California (finished -5)

On round one...

Coming into this week I knew my game was trending in the right direction and it felt good. I heard this course was tough but I'm always up for the challenge. I didn't really make many up and downs, I kept the ball in play and that's what really matters out here.

On the four birdies in a row...

I had three bogeys right before that, and to be honest I think I was just pretty tired. The heat was baking and it was a long round, so I just had to settle in and keep moving forward.

On the course...

It's a tough course. If you make one mistake out there it can start to pile up, so you just have to try to minimize those and keep the ball in play.

On his takeaway from today...

It's going to come down to my short game. I'm not going to hit the ball as great every day, so I just have to stick to my strengths. It's important out here to know how to hit a shot, this is why we practice.

Chun An Yu, Arizona State (finished -3):

On play today ...

"I hit my tee shots really well today, but more importantly our (coaching staff to him) course management was awesome. I consider myself as a long hitter, so for certain holes, I was able to carry bunkers and hazards. One thing that I can improve on is to trust my game even more. I believe if I do that I can shoot better score Saturday."

Arizona State Head Coach Matt Thurmond:

On play of Chun An Yu ...

Like all season Kevin was great today. He didn't make any big mistakes and he just did what he does, which is hit it long and high and straight while making very few mistakes. He's just really steady on and off the course. Our team desperately needed it from him today. Not only did he show everyone on our team this course can be played well but he kept us in it when the other guys didn't have their stuff. The course is really hard and only guys that can be really steady like Kevin will shoot under par.

Austin Eckroat, Oklahoma State (finished -3):

On the key to the first round...

I hit really well out there today. I didn't really make any putts or any good par saves but other than that I hit really well.

On the course...

It's a tough course. I hit really well which made it a lot easier, but I can see where my mistakes were. I got a few good breaks but it's tough and you have to play well.

On taking the momentum into round two...

It's a short break between rounds, so I just have to keep doing the same things that I did today.

Julian Perico, Arkansas (finished -1):

On the opening round...

I feel alright. I felt that I could've played better, I don't think I played that well but I still managed to shoot one under par which is what you try to do here. I hit a lot of poor shots out there so I'm happy with my score but I'm disappointed in a few things.

On his group pairings...

We all played well and we were feeding off each other. Every one of us had our own moments in the round so it was fun. It was relaxing because we played pretty quick.

On his passion for golf...

I just love the game. I get a little excited out there and I can get really mad if I make mistakes because it's something that I should be able to control. I think if I make good decisions out there tomorrow, then I should play better.

On making adjustments for the rest of the week...

Today didn't meet my expectations. Shooting 71 is a good round, but I felt that I played where I should've shot better.

On making adjustments for the rest of the week...

Today didn't meet my expectations. Shooting 71 is a good round, but I felt that I played where I should've shot better. I got a little sloppy at some points, but if I get hot out there then I think I can play better. I just need to read a few things better.

On being in the top-10 after round 1...

The second wave still hasn't finished yet, but I think I will stay inside the top-15. You've got the best players in the country here, so I'll take being in the top-10.

Billy Tom Sargent, Western Kentucky (finished -1):

On today's round...

Overall, I had a pretty solid day. I started off a little slow with a bogey or two, but when I got through a few holes I hit some good wedges and made a few birdies.

On going forward...

I'm just going to try to stay solid on the fairways and greens and give myself some opportunities for birdies.

Kyler Dunkle, Utah (finished -3):

On the course...

This golf course is hard. It forces you to pay attention to your lines off tees but more importantly, you have to focus on where you're leaving yourself on the greens. Some of the pins can be really challenging and sometimes it's hard to judge when you're chipping. Overall, it's a hard course but there are definitely holes you can take advantage of.

On today's positives...

I putted really well. I also hit the ball off the tee pretty well, I think I only missed one fairway. I gave myself a lot of wedges and I think of the five or six that I hit, I hit one green. I wasn't hitting the ball well on the greens so I just need to figure out the irons and wedges.

On taking momentum to tomorrow's round...

I really just have to do the same things I did today. I can take confidence from the way I was hitting the ball off the tee so I'll try to do that tomorrow to give myself some birdies. Hopefully the putter still works tomorrow so I can stay hot.