

PGA Championship

Spieth salvages a 72 as Grand Slam pursuit begins quietly

By DOUG FERGUSON
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CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Jordan Spieth felt he was on the verge of shooting himself out of the PGA Championship. Instead of looking at his scorecard, he considered what he had left to play at Quail Hollow.

He gunned his putt from just short of the fifth green about 10 feet by the hole and missed that one for bogey. He did the same thing on the par-3 sixth hole, and suddenly he was 3 over for the round. At that point, he looked a lot closer to a weekend off than the final leg of the career Grand Slam.

Waiting in the fairway on the par-5 seventh gave him time to think.

"I thought to myself: 'They are not giving birdies at all. You have to pull off some solid shots to make birdies on those holes,'" Spieth said.

When the green cleared, he ripped a hybrid from 246 yards over the water and onto the green, where it settled 30 feet away on the fringe to set up a two-putt birdie. He hit another good drive on the short par-4 eighth and hit a wedge that skipped and stopped a foot from the cup for another birdie.

A solid par on his last hole allowed Spieth to escape with a 72.

It was a reasonable start to his quest for the career Grand Slam because it could have been worse.

"I had a couple of easy holes left," Spieth said. "If I were to finish par-par-par,



AP Photo/Chris O'Meara

Jordan Spieth watches his tee shot on the 11th hole during the first round of the PGA Championship at the Quail Hollow Club on Thursday in Charlotte, N.C.

I would have thrown myself out of the tournament. ... If I was focused on my score, it might have been a different story. I was focused on what we had left."

His caddie, Michael Greller, told him to have three good birdie chances and see where that left him.

"I had three looks, and almost got back all the way to even," Spieth said.

It was still five shots behind Thorbjorn Olesen, who shot 67 to lead the morning wave. It was four shots worse than U.S. Open champion Brooks Koepka, who almost missed his share of putts and shot a 68.

Spieth was concerned going into the week about his driver, especially with a 7,600-yard course and turf that had been soft because of rain.

Turns out it was his putting.

He didn't make a putt longer than 5 feet all day, though part of that was the firm, fast nature of the new greens at Quail Hollow.

"Some of these putts that I had for birdie are really one-out-of-five to make," he said. "I didn't make the one out of five. Instead, I missed the 10 out of 10 from that kind of range. If I grabbed a couple of those, then I would be pleased."

Spieth looked like he had the greens mastered early on, particular on the 12th hole when his wedge went to the top shelf of the green and the pin was at bottom, some 70 feet away. He sent the putt some 25 feet to the right along a spine, it slowed as it caught the ridge and then turned hard to left and stopped a foot from the hole.

That was as good as it got all day.

His 125-foot eagle putt from the front of the 14th green caught a slope and the grain and rolled off the green and into the putt. Twice more on the front nine, he had long lags from just off the green that ran out 10 feet or more and led to the bogeys.

"His speed was a little

PGA Championship
Leaderboard

First Round

Thorbjorn Olsen	67	-4
Kevin Kisner	67	-4
Grayson Murray	68	-3
Gary Woodland	68	-3
Brooks Koepka	68	-3
Notables		
Rickie Fowler	69	-2
Jason Day	70	-1
Dustin Johnson	70	-1
Phil Mickelson	79	+8

bit off from about 40 feet," Koepka said. "He had a couple putts that he just ran them 10, 15 feet by. But he struck it really well. It was pretty impressive to watch him play No. 7. He's a grinder. It's impressive to watch him play. He picks apart a golf course really, really well. At that age, that's a lot of maturity."

It's what has put Spieth in position to become the sixth — and at age 24, the youngest — player to complete the career Grand Slam. Spieth won the Masters and U.S. Open two years ago, and then added the British Open last month.

Spieth said he wouldn't feel additional pressure because he already has a major this year.

"I don't think I was as free rolling as I thought I would be, as you can tell by some frustration," he said.

"If I would have shot 1 over and didn't strike it well and everything was average, it would have been fine. But when I had the chances that I had and I just couldn't get the ball to go in on the greens, that is when I get the most frustrated I can get out there."

FOOTBALL: Log was 12 feet long, used for team building

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on eastern Long Island, according to Suffolk County homicide detectives. No other injuries were reported.

The team was participating in an exercise camp before the official start of team training on Monday. The football season begins in September.

Carlin Schledorn, a Sachem East graduate who played football as a junior, said carrying the log, which is about 12 feet (3.7 meters) long and the diameter of a utility pole, was an exercise used for "team building."

"It's very big. It's like a tree, and it's a challenge for people who weightlift," he said outside his home, which is near the high school. "Five or six people do it at once. I feel horrific for the team and coaches because I know them and they are all great men."

School officials, including the head coach, did not comment on the exercise.

Douglas Casa, executive director of the Corey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut, which works to improve safety for athletes, questioned the wisdom of teenagers performing an exercise that involves carrying a heavy object and that was developed for Navy SEALs, "potentially a very different clientele."

He said, "There's so much potential for things to go wrong that I would really want people to think twice before doing something like that."

Tom Combs, executive director of the athletic organization that oversees high school sports in the county,

said offseason practices are permitted as long as they are not mandated and are open to everyone.

"What exercises that are conducted are the privy of the school district and individuals running the workouts," he said. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and the Sachem school district."

Mileto was an 11th grader at the school. A person at his home declined to speak with reporters.

Police said he was in the middle of a group of about five players carrying the log over their heads when the accident happened shortly before 9 a.m. About a half-dozen coaches were on the field at the time, said Suffolk County Assistant Police Commissioner Justin Meyers. In an unrelated incident, another player fell and hit his head Wednesday at the school during training, police said. His injuries were not life-threatening.

Teammates gathered outside Stony Brook University Hospital, where Mileto was pronounced dead. They didn't comment.

Sachem Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Graham extended condolences to Mileto's family and friends and said support services will be offered "for as long as needed." The statement on the district website did not describe how the accident occurred.

"He was my best friend. We grew up together. We knew each other since we were 2," said classmate Olivia Cassereli. "He cared about everyone else. He put others before himself and everyone loved him and was friends with him."

RODEO: Only one bull rider out of nine entries turned in a qualified ride

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blazing time of 17.20 seconds for the fastest time of the night and it also shot her to the top of the overall leaderboard.

"I have good friends that take care of me during this week and also during Pendleton (Round-Up) and I just have a good vibe here, I guess," Wall said of her success.

As the fourth rider of the night, Wall had a few chances to study her fellow cowgirl and know what she needed to do. Once she came speeding into the arena, she rounded the first two barrels with ease and made a quick turn around the third barrel before Foxy did all the work to cross the line. Wall said that the third barrel had been giving her troubles recently, but tonight's run was about as perfect as she could have hoped for.

"I really wanted to get my third barrel really tight and (Foxy) smoked it tonight," Wall said, smiling. "I was really proud of the run."

In bareback riding, Cowley, Wyoming's JR Vezain and Carthage, Texas' Tilden Hooper did not have much competition as they were the only two competitors of the night due to no-shows by the other six, likely to travel issues. Hooper made the most of the pared down field and took the top spot of the night and the \$100 bonus as he rode Calgary Stampede's Not Crystal for 80.5 points.

And for a guy sitting No. 24 in the world standings and needing to make up some ground for a spot in the National Finals, he'll take any money he can get.

"That was a young horse and you know when you get on a Calgary they're really going to try and do something to you and this one was no different," he said of his ride, which places him in third place overall. "He came out strong, really bucking and I probably should have given him a better ride for some more points but it's good."

Hooper also spent some time prior to his ride taking in the new arena at what he called "one of my favorite rodeos around."

"I love coming here and always seem to have pretty good luck. The crowd's great, good money, they bring in a

lot of good horses here and really go above and beyond. It's a small town in the middle of nowhere, but it's dang sure a big-time rodeo."

Staying at the bucking chutes, Canadian cowboy Layton Green has put together a very successful season and sits No. 4 in the world standings for saddle bronc right now. So it was a little disappointing to him when his first ride on Thursday scored him just 65 points, but he jumped at the chance for a re-ride when it was offered to him.

And Green made the most of his re-ride, as he took on Calgary's Weary Joke and spurred him to a 85.5 point ride to take the top ride of the night and also move into a tie for first place overall. Weary Joke made it tough on Green out of the chute, jolting him for a few seconds before smoothing out and giving Green a fantastic finish.

"He's a little harder for the first couple and then after that he just stacked up and bucked," Green said. "He was a good one to have for a re-ride, that's for sure."

Only one bull rider out of nine entries turned in a qualified ride on Thursday, and it was Browning, Montana's Dakota Louis who took on Corey & Lange's Cowah Bunga for a rough 72 point ride that featured Louis getting banged and pinned up against a gate for a short second.

In tie-down roping, it was Redmond, Oregon resident Roger Nonella that took home the \$100 bonus for the top time of the night, as he tied his calf in 10.4 seconds. His time also put him into a tie for first place overall after his 10.2 in slack earlier in the day.

Then in team roping, it was the duo of Matt Sherwood of Pima, Arizona and Walt Woodard of Stephenville, Texas that roped the best of the night, getting both ends of the steer knotted at 4.7 seconds. Hermiston resident Jake Stanley and his partner Brent Falon of Yakima, Washington registered a no time, as did Pendleton's Phoenix Everano and his partner David Motes of Tolar, Texas.

Action picks back up on Friday night with Mutton Bustin' at 7:25 p.m. and then the rodeo begins at 7:45 p.m. sharp.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Hilden Cooper, of Carthage, Texas, rides Y Not Crystal Thursday night in bareback riding at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston. Cooper's 80-point ride was enough to win the night.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Heath Thomas, of Hemphill, Texas, wrestles his steer Thursday during the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.