

Kerrville Daily Times

Earning seniority

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The Club at Comanche Trace hosted the Texas Senior Amateur Championship first round on Friday, with 160 golfers from around the state competing in the 56-hole tournament.

Three of the club's members — Bill Stillwell, Dennis Emerson and Tom Wege — opened the tournament with mixed results after 18 holes.

Stillwell, playing in the Super Senior division (65 and older), stands in fourth place after a four-over par round of 76. Stillwell took advantage of calm winds following his morning tee time, posting a 36 on The Club's newest nine-hole course, The Creeks. A 40 on the back nine left Stillwell six strokes back of defending Super Series champion, Andy Wall of Tyler.

Emerson held on through a roller-coaster front nine on The Hills and a windy back nine on The Creeks to card a four-over par 76, putting him in a tie for 28th place. Playing in the Senior division, Emerson opened bogey, birdie, double bogey while battling some butterflies.

"I overcooked that shot on the third hole, I guess adrenaline or something was in me, and I stuck it right in the back lake," Emerson said. "I practiced hard (this summer), I played a lot, but you know the one thing you can't practice? Controlling your nervous system."

Emerson's hoping a morning tee time will suit him better today, teeing off at 8:36 a.m., but will continue to relish the opportunity to play in such a historic tournament on his home course.

"For me, I'm having fun, I'm enjoying myself," Emerson said. "The competition is great, the people are really wonderful and we get to show off Comanche Trace."

Tom Wege, playing in his first tournament since being diagnosed with malignant melanoma six years ago, shot an 83 on Friday.

Wege struggled early on giving away strokes on the green, as the 3.5 handicap player at Comanche made some uncharacteristic mistakes in his return to competitive golf.

"I think I can play better than that — I know I can play better than that," Wege said.

Wege, also playing in the senior division, couldn't pass up the opportunity to play in a tournament taking place in his backyard, his first since moving to Kerrville from Wisconsin.

"I thought it would be good to come out and support the club," Wege said. "I like playing with these better players."

Herb Fisher, The Woodlands, and Jerry Hudgins, Houston, enter today's round with a share of the lead at three-under par in the Senior division.

“There are some extremely strong players here,” Emerson said. “Hopefully they enjoy our wonderful city while they’re here.”

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