

ILLINOIS GOLFER THE OPENING 9

Monday,
July 12, 2021

Glover comes all the way back

REPORTING FROM SILVIS, ILLINOIS

1 Lucas Glover, a thoroughbred player, is a classic mudder. He won the 2009 U.S. Open at a rain-soaked Bethpage Black in New York. Sunday at TPC Deere Run, in a persistent light rain and swirling winds, he won the 50th John Deere Classic, his first victory in over 10 years.

Glover, 41, collected his fourth PGA Tour title via a 7-under-par 64, matching the best round of the day. Four strokes behind at the start of the day and teeing off an hour before the last group, Glover birdied five holes in a six-hole stretch to break out of a roiling pack of potential winners. His 13-foot birdie putt on the par-5 17th gave him a three-stroke lead, and despite the chances for joint runner-ups **Ryan Moore** and **Kevin Na**, and all the others, especially overnight leader **Sebastian Munoz**, nobody could catch him.

Glover finished at 19-under-par 265. Moore and Na ended up at 267, with a quartet of players, Munoz, **Adam Schenz**, **Luke List** and **Scott Brown**, another stroke behind.

For Glover, who last had a trophy shoved his way at the 2011 Wells Fargo Championship, the outcome was equal parts relief and renewal. He was beginning to look like one of those guys who won a U.S. Open and slipped into obscurity. But not in his mind. Nor was victory out of his mind.

"I don't know if delayed," Glover said. "I think any time you win it's gratifying. I'm also not one to think that – I've always been a big believer in there's nothing guaranteed in this game. It can be easy one day and be really, really, really hard the next.

"Yeah, it's been a difficult 10 years, but I never lost my faith, never lost my drive, never lost the self-belief. It's a great feeling.



J.R. Howell / John Deere Classic

FITS LIKE A GLOVER Lucas Glover, over 10 years without a prize package, holds the John Deere Classic trophy after his victory on Sunday.

"I felt some good golf coming. I didn't know how good. A lot of people, if they're honest, would admit that sometimes it comes out of nowhere. I've been playing well and had some good rounds and some good finishes of late. A 63 (Friday) and a 64 in a week, proved myself right on that, I guess."

Glover had finished fourth in the Texas Open in April and tied for eighth in the Schwab Challenge in May, but in a stretch of nine tournaments starting with Texas, he'd also missed three cuts and was mid-pack in most others. The Deere was the 10th tournament, and the payoff.

"This week things just went my way, and I executed when it mattered," Glover said.

Especially down the stretch. His inward 4-under 32 was unmatched by anyone else in the top seven.

Glover's birdie binge started on the par-3 12th hole, immediately following his only bogey of the day – and only the fifth of the week. He ran down a 14-foot putt, then sank a four-footer on No. 13, a 6-foot, 9-incher on No. 14, and a 3-foot, 7-inch putt for a fourth straight bird on No. 15.

"They went in and I kept the pedal down," Glover said. He nearly made a

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fifth straight birdie putt on the 16th, but the two-putt birdie on the 17th gave him the cushion for a two-stroke victory.

Nobody else made a real run, even though the PGA Tour decided to play “lift, clean and place,” allowing the players to put the ball in their hands, with the light rain following similar conditions on Saturday. The course was by no means soaked, merely wet. But aside from **Kevin Tway’s** 64 – he tied for 22nd – of all those in the top 10, only Hank Lebioda’s 6-under 65 came close to Glover’s race into red figures.

“I wanted to get it to 20 (under),” Glover said. “Push, push, push, and I think that kept me from getting complacent, from getting too nervy. I knew it was going to take a bunch more under par.”

Glover climbed up to 79th in the world ranking with the victory, and was off to the British Open, for which he was already exempt.

“Once we get there, it’s one of the greatest events we have in our sport,” Glover said. “Very excited to get over there and compete and get after it.”

Because his U.S. Open exemption had long since run out, Glover almost was nowhere on a couple of occasions. Twice, he went to the Korn Ferry Tour finals and won his PGA Tour card anew. Now, he’s exempt through the end of the 2022-23 season, and \$1,116,000 richer.

“In the grand scheme of things, I still was a pro golfer and still had a chance to get my job back,” Glover said. “You know, that was pretty low, but as far as how I kept going, it’s just self-belief and the ability to work hard, trust what you’re working on and believe in yourself, and I’ve always done that.”

And next week at Royal St. George’s?

“We’re all tied on Thursday again. It doesn’t matter what you did the week before or the year before or 10 years before. That’s a new week.”

2 Munoz opened the final round by missing the first fairway to the left and then shanking his second shot across the fairway to the right at a 90-degree angle from the green. He was able to scramble for par, but bogeyed the par-3 third and never really got going. The even-par 71 for 16-under 268 wasn’t

close to what he needed or expected. It can fairly be said he lost the tournament as much as Glover won it.

“It was just an awkward lie and ... it kind of makes you think, ‘What’s going on?’ Munoz said of the shank. “Took me three holes to readjust from that and then did a good job from there. I had a rough start and was able to kind of stay in it. It will build some experience and we’ll be ready next time.”

3 Ryan Moore turned down the British Open exemption which went to the top non-qualified player in the top 5. **Adam Long**, who finished 23rd, was next on the R&A alternate list and jumped on the charter to the UK.

“We’ve had a family trip planned for next week basically for the last few months, and at this point in time in my career I’ve played a lot of golf tournaments,” Moore said. “I don’t want to bail on a trip like that.”

“It was good to see my body feel good and feel good throughout the entire week, but flying on a plane for 10 hours, a lot cooler weather, it’s unpredictable how I might feel. So I might have to weigh those things and figure it out with her, but I would say at this point I’m going to commit to going with my family.”

4 It seemed like this was the swan song for three-time winner **Steve Stricker** at the Deere, but he put a pause on that thought after his closing ever-par 71 for 9-under 275.

“I still feel like I have a win in me out here. If I can get the putter going really; that’s been kind of the main -- the problem for me lately. I had a chance earlier in the year at Waste Management. I feel like I’m hitting it well enough to contend, to get in position to try to win. Doing it is another thing, too.”

“I hope I can come back. It all depends on that schedule on the Champions Tour and how my game is trending at the time probably. But yeah, I would love to come back here again.”

5 The four-round scoring average was 69.553, including Sunday’s 69.875.

6 The final Birdies for Charity number: 1,905 birds. How many millions that

Deere Numbers

Leading Finishers

1 Lucas Glover	265 -19
T2 Ryan Moore	267 -17
T2 Kevin Na	267 -17
T3 Adam Schenk	268 -16
T3 Luke List	268 -16
T3 Scott Brown	268 -16
T3 Sebastian Munoz	268 -16
T8 Hank Lebioda	269 -15
T8 Seamus Power	269 -15
T8 Brian Stuard	269 -15
T11 Cameron Percy	270 -14
T11 Patton Kizzire	270 -14
T11 Harold Varner III	270 -14
T11 Sean O’Hair	270 -14
T11 Russell Henley	270 -14
T11 Jhonattan Vegas	270 -14
T11 Cameron Champ	270 -14

Notables

T18 Jason Dufner	271 -13
T18 Doug Ghim	271 -13
T34 Zach Johnson	274 -10
T41 Steve Stricker	275 - 9
T41 Camilo Villegas	275 - 9

raises will be known in the fall.

7 The unseasonable weather – a 73-degree day with overcast skies, a 15-mph northeast wind and the spitting clouds – helped hold attendance down. Tournament brass were mum as usual, but 8,000 would have been a reasonable estimate. The continuing COVID restrictions were to limit the crowd to 15,000, but the weather, and likely the \$50 ticket price, did the job instead.

8 **Doug Ghim**, the last player from Illinois in the only PGA Tour stop regularly in Illinois, closed with a 3-under 68 for 13-under 271, finishing tied for 18th. He collected \$82,150.

9 **Min Woo Lee** won the Scottish Open on the first hole of sudden-death with a pair of Illinois-connected players. Illinois alum **Thomas Detry** and Northwestern alum (well, one semester’s worth) **Matt Fitzpatrick** had tied Lee.