

ILLINOIS GOLFER THE OPENING 9

Sunday,
August 21, 2022

'Ice' doesn't melt in BMW heat

REPORTING FROM WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

1 Patty Ice, the Caves Valley Country Club gallery called **Patrick Cantlay** last year as he first took the lead and then took out **Bryson DeChambeau** in a six-hole playoff.

He's looking pretty cool again this year. Though Cantlay actually showed emotion – a baby right-hand fist pump – when he holed out from the 14th fairway for an eagle 3 on Saturday afternoon to take the lead in the BMW Championship.

Cantlay scooted by **Xander Schauffele** and world No. 1 **Scottie Scheffler** with that 104-yard wedge shot that sucked back into the hole, survived a bogey at the 17th, then birdied the 18th from eight feet to finish with a 6-under-par 65 for 12-under 201 and a one-stroke lead over Schauffele and **Scott Stallings** with a round to play in the 119th edition of ye olde Western Open. **Adam Scott** and Scheffler are two back, with **Collin Morikawa** and **Aaron Wise** three back.

Like any great player, Cantlay thought it could have been better.

"I left a few out there," he insisted before repairing to the practice green. "But I made birdie (at the last) and kept the momentum to take into tomorrow."

Cantlay's holdout was a rouser. Schauffele, playing with him, saw it, and everybody else on the course heard the reaction to it.

"It was a big lob wedge," Cantlay said. "It landed perfect, and it's an extra bonus that it goes in. On my wedge shots, I've been walking up to the green to see exactly where I wanted to land it. It landed in the perfect spot."

Cantlay's duel with DeChambeau last year became the stuff of legend because of the quality of the shots he hit. That wedge might be a harbinger of what's to come Sunday – if the putts keep falling. He's taken only 83 putts through three rounds, one his first missed three-footer



Wilmington Country Club

DAWN PATROL The Wilmington Country Club grounds crew, supplemented by help from nearby clubs, has done a tremendous job preparing the course this week.

of the season, that coming on the 17th.

"I like bentgrass, and this golf course is in really pure shape," Cantlay said. "It was even better before they burned out the greens."

2 Will Zalatoris' story went from contender this week and for the Tour's overall title to the other side with one swing or step on Saturday. Somehow, his movement tightened a nerve and after considerable work on the grass adjacent to the fifth tee with the PGA Tour's physio man, he had to withdraw.

Zalatoris came into the week leading the PGA Tour's standings, which would earn him a 10-stroke bonus to start next week's Tour Championship, a handicap tournament. Now, he'll drop to second or third, depending on who wins, and will get fewer strokes.

Zalatoris was feeling the pain as he played the fourth green, and still managed to two-putt for par, limping noticeably as he walked to the hole. But he could play no more, and after work to correct whatever went wrong by the trainer, he pulled the scorecard from his pocket and shoot

hands with fellow competitor **Emiliano Grillo**, who finished the round as a single.

Allen Hobbs, Zalatoris' agent, said the injury occurred when Zalatoris tweaked his lower back during a shot on the third hole.

Zalatoris withdrew from last year's British Open because of a wrist injury.

3 Schauffele and Cantlay might as well be playing in a team tournament. The pals will be paired together again Sunday, the fourth straight day they go around together. Schauffele's bogey-free 5-under 66 included an eagle on the par-5 third and a trio of birdies.

"It's just a comfortable pairing," Schauffele said. "We've played so much together, with each other and against each other, that I can club off him. I know how he hits the ball, he knows how I hit the ball. If I flush one or he flushes one, it sort of is extra information that we can use."

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You know, just in case the \$2.7 million first prize isn't enough motivation.

4 Stallings, tied for second, is in uncharted territory to some degree. He's never slept while inside the top 10 in a major or a playoff tournament, but with only two bogeys in his last 41 holes, he's very much in form. Having come into Wilmington 46th in the playoff standings, he needs to finish 17th or better to advance to East Lake.

"That was my number one goal to start the year," Stallings said. "A lot of the goals that we set in Napa, I've achieved. Being in contention, kind of creating some variance within my game as far as when I am playing well, kind of sneak up there a little bit closer there towards the lead, and just hadn't really had that Sunday great round."

He has one more chance.

5 Aaron Wise, tied for sixth and three off the lead, lost the 2015 Western Amateur championship to **Dawson Armstrong** on the second extra hole when Armstrong holed out for eagle.

This week, Armstrong is chasing a Korn Ferry Tour card in Idaho. Wise is chasing a shot at the Atlanta pot of gold.

6 Jordan Spieth was tied for the lead after his birdie on the fourth hole, and then he wasn't. He tried to hit the water-protected fifth green from out of a fairway bunker, and splashed instead.

"This one's on me," he told caddie Michael Greller, who advised against the play, before swinging.

It certainly was. He shot 3-over 74 and is tied for 26th.

7 Since the Tour's playoffs began, NBC has been infatuated with where players stand in the race to get to East Lake. After nearly every hole, the status of players close to qualifying or falling from the top 30 is explained. It's a crutch NBC loves in lieu of the real story of who's trying to win the tournament. In the minds of the players, the top 30 doesn't matter until late on Sunday. If it doesn't matter to them, why should it matter to a viewer?

8 **Course stats:** The field averaged 69.866 strokes on Saturday, the low

Sunday Pairings

No. 1 Tee (Central Time) TV: ESPN+ 6:30 am; Golf: 11am; NBC 1 pm

7:00	Wyndham Clark	220		
7:05	Viktor Hovland	217	Cameron Tringale	217
7:15	Chez Reavie	216	Mito Pereira	217
7:25	Joohyung Kim	216	Seamus Power	216
7:35	Kevin Kisner	216	Lucas Glover	216
7:45	Mackenzie Hughes	215	Si Woo Kim	216
7:55	Justin Thomas	214	Luke List	215
8:05	Troy Merritt	214	Tom Hoge	214
8:20	Alex Smalley	214	Chris Kirk	214
8:30	Maverick McNealy	213	Alex Noren	213
8:40	Sebastian Munoz	213	Matt Fitzpatrick	213
8:50	Davis Riley	212	Sepp Straka	212
9:00	Cam Davis	211	Tony Finau	212
9:10	Adam Hadwin	211	Keegan Bradley	211
9:20	Brian Harman	211	Billy Horschel	211
9:35	Russell Henley	210	Taylor Moore	211
9:45	Matt Kuchar	210	Marc Leishman	210
9:55	Jordan Spieth	209	Keith Mitchell	210
10:05	K.H. Lee	209	Kurt Kitayama	209
10:15	Sahith Theegala	209	Emiliano Grillo	209
10:25	J.J. Spaun	209	J.T. Poston	209
10:35	Harold Varner III	208	Max Homa	209
10:50	Shane Lowry	208	Hideki Matsuyama	208
11:00	Trey Mullinax	208	Sam Burns	208
11:10	Brendan Steele	208	Lucas Herbert	208
11:20	Cameron Young	207	Jon Rahm	208
11:30	C. Bezuidenhout	207	Tyrrell Hatton	207
11:40	Rory McIlroy	206	Andrew Putnam	207
11:50	Taylor Pendrith	206	Sungjae Im	206
12:05	Corey Connors	205	Denny McCarthy	206
12:15	Aaron Wise	204	Joaquin Miemann	205
12:25	Scottie Scheffler	203	Collin Morikawa	204
12:35	Scott Stallings	202	Adam Scott	203
12:45	Patrick Cantlay	201	Xander Schauffele	202

for the week. Only **Lucas Herbert** and **Adam Hadwin** birdied the second hole.

9 If what **Alan Shipnuck** of *Fire Pit Collective* and **Bob Harig** of *Sports Illustrated* have reported comes to pass, **Tiger Woods** wants to change the structure of the PGA Tour completely: Go from non-profit to for-profit status to attract outside investors and set up a LIV-style schedule of 18 no-cut \$20 million tournaments within the regular Tour schedule, using current tournaments to do so. That is what Woods and **J.P. McManus**, the billionaire whose course will host the Ryder Cup in 2027, proposed to top players Wednesday. It goes past the Tour's plan to shower extra millions on players next year.

One can only imagine what a sponsor like John Deere, loyal to the circuit for 24 years now despite too many schedule changes, few of them favorable, to repeat, will think about the plan.

Shipnuck also reported the Player Advisory Council meeting included fronting each PGA Tour member \$500,000 per season, effectively advance payment on prize money. Hey, like the LIV Golf lawyer said his tour does.

Meanwhile, the number of players going to the LIV Golf group after the Tour Championship or Presidents Cup is now reportedly up to seven. Things have come a long way since 1978, the last year when if you finished 71st or worse in a week, you didn't get paid.

— Tim Cronin