

Southwest Putting Tour
Mike Baldoza Texas Open
Tyler Texas, Course 1

June 3, noon, June 4, 9am 2023

It is always a honor playing in the Mike Baldoza Texas Open, the event where we all remember the best and most popular PPA pro ever to come out of Texas. The weather started out beautiful on Saturday but a sudden thunderstorm, with hail, hit the course during the third round. A decision was made to start at that point at 9am on Sunday. Sunday was a perfect day, not too hot and no rain.

In the PPA division on Saturday, host pro Tom Adair took the first round lead with a 28, one up on Mason Spradlin and Brice Bergesen. It should be pointed out that the course in Tyler is one of the most frustrating courses we play. The holes look easy, a lot of them are short, but it is darn near impossible to average much below 30. And the scores are always bunched, pretty much one stroke per round usually separates first to out of the money. So having a early lead means nothing. The leader after the second round was a tie at 59 between Adair, Jeffrey Smith and Mason Spradlin. Jeffrey was at 89 and had the lead after three rounds when the rain came.

After the first of five rounds Sunday Brice Bergesen took the halfway lead at 118. That did not last long as he bogeyed holes 8,9 and 10 in a row his next round on a course that you just cannot make 3's. Geoffrey Mosk took his turn as the leader after five rounds at 149. The tournament was won by Jeffrey in the sixth round as he shot a 24, lowest score of the tournament by three strokes! To make it worse for his playing partner, Mosk shot a 34 to lose 10 shots in one round. Once he got the lead Jeffrey finished with two solid 29's to shoot 234 and beat Lee Messinger by four shots. Brice was third at 239 and Geoffrey rallied back after his disastrous sixth round for fourth place at 240. This was the sixth Texas Open win for Jeffrey Smith, tying him with Rainey Statum. Lee Messinger and Marc Portugal each have three Open wins.

In the amateur division there were also several leaders and thirty was a hard score to surpass as only four scores were shot under thirty in eight rounds. Chris Conradi and Mike Huckaby shared the first round lead at 30, and Huckaby took the second round lead at 58, one ahead of Steven Yancey who shot a second round 27. Mike was steady his last two rounds of the first half and was at 122 at the halfway mark, two ahead of Brian Dunn and three up on Steven.

Mike slipped a little in the fifth round and Brian Dunn took the lead at 154, one ahead. Brian remained the leader after six rounds by one shot, at 187 but Gary Plain moved into a tie with Mike one shot back. The three players stayed close after seven rounds as Mike shot a 30 for 217 and Brian and Gary were just one back going into the final round. The final round almost always determines the winners in Tyler, it is always that close. Playing first Mike shot a respectable 31 for a 248 total while Brian slipped with a back nine 18 and a 252 total, which dropped him into a third place tie with Steven Yancey. Gary Plain had the low 8th round score with a 30 and tied Mike at 248. So, after eight grueling rounds, one more to determine the amateur division winner of the Mike Baldoza Texas Open trophy. Mike had the early lead on the front nine but went cold and Gary prevailed 31-33.

The course owners, Tom and Kat Adair arranged a wonderful dinner at the Daniel Boone restaurant, a awesome place because you can get free beans and Blue Bell ice cream any time before or after dinner.