



Fit to be tied

Oklahoma State has been in this position many times before. In fact, no team in the Big 12 Conference or the old Big 8 has come close to the success of the Cowboys when it comes to men's golf.

So it came as no surprise Monday night that when the final putt dropped - in near darkness - Oklahoma State was in first place after 36 holes at the Big 12 Men's Golf Tournament.

But the Cowboys aren't alone. Joining them atop the leaderboard at Prairie Dunes Country Club are the Colorado Buffaloes of head coach and Hutchinson native Roy Edwards.

"We thrilled," said Edwards, who is in his third year as the Buffaloes coach. "We've got two more days of this, but it's where we want to be."

The Cowboys and Buffaloes are tied for first, but they haven't separated themselves by any means. Texas A&M is four strokes back and Baylor another five.

The medalist races is wide open as well at the halfway mark. Baylor's Bill Allcorn led by as many as three stroke during the day, but after 36 holes, he is tied with Colorado's Derek Tolan at one-under 139.

"I put myself in position to win the golf tournament," said Allcorn, who finished 11th as a sophomore when the 2007 tournament was played at Prairie Dunes. "That's what I wanted to do. I'm a senior and I want to do well here."

Tolan shot a 2-under 68 in his second round - the low score of the day that three others also achieved - to reach 139 as well. Allcorn shot 68 in the morning, while Tolan, Burgoon and Andrea Pavan of Texas A&M were 2-under with their second rounds.

"I just kind of plugged along, nothing spectacular," Tolan said. "I played sound golf and kept everything in front of me. Use all the clichés because that's just the way it was for me out there today."

Bronson Burgoon of Texas A&M is one stroke back at 140, while Morgan Hoffmann of Oklahoma State and Pat Grady of Colorado are tied for fourth at 142.

Monday was simply an endurance test for the 60-player field. The tournament started an hour late because of heavy rains that hit the area the day before.

Nearly 12 hours after the first players teed off, the final group finished on the ninth green with the setting sun a distant memory.

In between, the field was greeted by temperatures in the mid-40s and the wind blowing 15 to 25 miles per hour out of the north.

"It was Prairie Dunes at its finest. That's what it's all about," Kansas State coach Tim Norris said. "The conditions were challenging to say the least. Fortunately, the greens were a little soft and slow, or we'd still be on that first 18."

For those who had never stepped on the Prairie Dunes course before Sunday's practice round, the tough conditions that greeted them Monday morning had to be disconcerting.

During Sunday's practice round, the wind howled from the south at 30 miles per hour.

One day later, the course played completely different.

"It has to be tough on some of the guys who have never been here," said Kansas State senior Robert Streb, who shot a 1-under 69 in his opening round and finds himself in seven place at 4-over 144 at the midway point. "It just seemed like it took forever to play out there today."

Streb and his teammates find themselves in seventh place in the team race at 45-over 605, but just one shot behind sixth-place Kansas and only six behind Texas Tech, which is in fifth place overall.

The Wildcats shot 304 in the opening round and came back with a 301 in the afternoon/evening session.

Kansas got off to a quick start and was just five shots off the lead after 18 holes, but while the likes of Colorado and Texas A&M raised the level of their game, the Jayhawks dropped back with a 306.

Zach Pederson, a senior from Spring Hill, led the Jayhawks with a 7-over 147, which puts him in a tie for 11th place. Pederson opened with a 71, but shot 76 in his second round.

Five players were 10 strokes or better in their second round and that included Kansas State sophomore Kyle Smell, who opened with an 83, but came back with a 3-over 73.

Defending champion Rickie Fowler got off to a slow start, but is in the hunt for another individual title. Fowler followed his opening 74 with a 71 and is six shots back at 145. He is one of three Cowboys in the top eight.

Nebraska, Colorado and Texas A&M made the biggest jumps from the first round to the second. Colorado improved by 15 shots and A&M by 17. The Cornhuskers improved by 26 shots - 319 to 293 - but improved just two spots, from 12th to 10th place.

The tournament continues today 8 a.m. with Baylor, Texas Tech and Kansas going off the No. 1 tee box, and Kansas State, Texas and Oklahoma off No. 10.

Oklahoma State, Colorado and Texas A&M get things started at 8:50 a.m. off the No. 1 tee, while Nebraska, Iowa State and Missouri will tee off at 9 a.m. on No. 10.

"This is a course that really identifies who is the playing the best - you can't fake it," said Edwards. "It's a great challenge. Prairie Dunes tests every part of your game."

Oklahoma State, which has won six of the 12 conference championships since the Big 12 was formed in 1997, is looking for its third straight team title.