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Jamieson and Hillier share lead on weather-hit first day



'I love this golf course and, when it got quite windy towards the end, I enjoyed that and it was good fun'

Scott Jamieson and British Masters winner Daniel Hillier shared the lead in the first round of the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters before play was halted by the weather at the [Peter Harradine](#) designed Doha Golf Course (DGC) on Thursday.

The leaders were out in the first group of the day on the back nine, shooting 7-under 65s before first a sandstorm, and then lightning forced play to be suspended.

After two missed cuts at the Open de Espana and Andalucia Masters, Florida-based Jamieson started positively in the final regular event of the season and took advantage of ideal conditions to card a flawless round set the clubhouse target as he bids to retain his DP World Tour Card.

"Delighted with that start. It was pretty solid tee to green and I managed to hole some putts today, which has probably let me down in the last few weeks – certainly been hitting the ball well enough to do better than I have done – but today was a different story," 346th-ranked Jamieson, who of picked up four shots going out then adding three further gains in the first five holes on his back nine in near-perfect morning conditions.

Jamieson, who has held full playing privileges on the main tour since 2011, sits 119th in the Race to Dubai and requires a minimum finish of 53rd to finish the season in the all-important top 116.

"It was lovely (being out first). The only problem is it is so humid but you obviously get less wind as you always know you are going to get wind here in the afternoon and the course is a little softer as well so, thankfully, I was able to take advantage of that," Jamieson, who won the Nelson Mandela Championship in 2012 and is close to clocking up 350 appearances on the circuit, said.

Jamieson's fellow Scots Stephen Gallacher, Robert MacIntyre and defending champion Ewen Ferguson completed rounds of 66 to share second place with Spain's Santiago Tarrío.

New Zealander Hillier was slower to hit his stride but opened with six pars before bursting into life with birdies at the 16th and 18th, an eagle at the par-five first and another birdie at the second. Further gains at the seventh and ninth took him alongside Jamieson.

"It'll be interesting to see how it goes this afternoon but I'll be at the hotel kicking up my feet, so happy days," Hillier, speaking before the weather disruption, said.

"You have to battle with the heat this week. A little bit of wind out there made it bearable. I just didn't do much wrong, had a good stretch through the middle that put me in a good position and kept my foot down from there."

Tarrio also finished off his own bogey-free round in style with an approach to two feet at the ninth to set up his sixth birdie. The Spaniard is secure in the top 116 of the Race to Dubai Rankings in partnership with Rolex, ensuring his presence on tour for another year.

"I never keep calm with myself. Never. Even with a card safe for next year. My problem is in my head, there's a lot of wind inside there, never mind the golf course. I didn't play my best golf this year, but I'm happy to stay one year more here with the big guys," he said.

A six-under-par on a weather-affected first day left defending champion Ferguson one shot off the lead. Ferguson's title defence got off to a tricky start with a three-putt but he responded well and made four birdies in five holes from the 17th.

"I three-putted my first hole for a par and thought 'here we go'," admitted Ferguson.

"But I managed to keep my head and rolled in a few nice putts. I was playing with Pablo and the fact we were both playing quite well helped as we fed off each other.

"I love this golf course and, when it got quite windy towards the end, I enjoyed that and it was good fun. I think the course here suits a bit of wind."

Gallacher, the only one of the leading sextet to start on the front nine, birdied three of the first four holes and turned in 31 before adding a sixth and final birdie at the 16th.

MacIntyre finished with back-to-back birdies, helped by an approach to six feet at the ninth, while Ferguson turned in 34 before making his move with a hat-trick of birdies from the first.

Finnish pair Kalle Samooja and Sami Valimaki, Sean Crocker, Thriston Lawrence, Andy Sullivan, Pablo Larrazabal and Joshua Grenville-Wood shared seventh place on five under par.

Among those still to complete their rounds, Spain's former champion Alvaro Quiros and England's Jordan Smith were highest on the leaderboard at three under through nine holes.

Following the earlier suspension of just over an hour as a wind blew in, play was eventually abandoned due to lightning and will restart at 6.30am local time today morning.

LEADING FIRST ROUND SCORES

Note play suspended due to a sandstorm and then threat of lightning. First round to be completed today:

65 - Scott Jamieson (Scot), Daniel Hillier (NZL)

66 - Ewen Ferguson (Scot), Stephen Gallacher (Scot), Robert MacIntyre (Scot), Santiago Tarrio (ESP)

67 - Andy Sullivan (Eng), Pablo Larrazabal (ESP), Kalle Samooja (FIN), Sean Crocker (USA), Thriston Lawrence (RSA), Sami Valimaki (FIN), Joshua Grenville-Wood (UAE)

68 - Aaron Rai (UK), Nacho Elvira (ESP), Edoardo Molinari (ITA), Alejandro Del Rey (ESP), Ryo Hisatsune (JPN)

69 - Jordan Smith (UK), Mike Lorenzo-Vera (FRA), Jorge Campillo (ESP), Fabrizio Zanotti (PAR), Alexander Knappe (GER), Alvaro Quiros (ESP)