Leader Balances Birdies, Bogeys

Tom Christian’s erratic round leaves him the front-runner in the Gerry Ashe Memorial.

By JEANNE ALBANESE
The Post-Standard

Tom Christian thought his five birdies in Friday’s first round of the Gerry Ashe Memorial would leave him enough time to make it to the race.

But six bogeys pushed Christian to the top of the leader board and to the last tee time for today’s second round, making it unlikely that the ardent auto racing fan will make it to Oswego Speedway on time tonight.

Christian’s one-under par 71 at the Tuscarora Golf Club left him at the top of the pack of 62 golfers who made the cut with scores of 77 or better. The 54-hole tournament concludes Sunday.

Christian made three birdies and three bogeys on the front side and three birdies with two bogeys on the back.

“I usually don’t make that many birdies or bogeys out here,” he said. “I only made seven pars. I’m not going to make six birdies tomorrow, so I’ll make more pars.”

Christian was the medalist after the first round of the Herald Amateur and finished in sixth place.

John Bedrowski, a member of the Tuscarora club, fired a 71, followed by five players in at 72: Jason Leach, Mark Frod, Alan Foster, Joe O’Don Jr. and Rick Jones: Seven players shot 73.

Todd DeChager, the defending champion, shot 78 and did not make the cut. DeChager made three birdies but also shot two double-bogeys.

“After I birdied the first two holes I thought I would shoot a 68 or 69,” DeChager said. “I didn’t even come close. I didn’t really play that bad, but I scored badly.”

Leach, 13, proved the first six holes of his round and then ran into trouble on the seventh hole. He drove his first shot under a tree, hit his second shot under another tree and then chipped over the green.

Leach thought he might double-bogey the hole, but instead chipped in for par.

“Then I birdied the point where my round really started going,” said Leach, a former golfer for Le Moyne College. “That was a tough shot. Then I played pretty consistently.”

Leach bogeyed the last hole to go 1-over par.

Leach, of Auburn, has played in a Syracuse district event in several years, but decided to try the Ashe after getting a break from his job at an accounting firm about a month ago.

“I’ve got a lot of time on my hands and I usually play well here,” he said. “I needed something to do.”