

# Golfweek

## LONG TIME - TEXAS ROPES FIRST WIN SINCE 2004

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"It feels awfully good, it's been a while," said coach John Fields, a few minutes after his team's 12-stroke victory over Florida in the Isleworth-UCF Collegiate Invitational, Texas' first since the 2004 Big 12 Championship. After junior Kevin Schultz tapped in for par on the 18<sup>th</sup> green, Fields, assistant coach Steve Keasler and Texas' four other players gathered in a circle on the putting surface. They gave each other high fives and low fives, but also kept their volume low. Back turned, you wouldn't have noticed. "This wasn't a surprise to us," said senior Matt Bortis, who shot a final-round 1-under 71 to finish tied for fourth individually, two shots behind medalist and Georgia sophomore Brian Harman. "We've been getting some crap from the local papers..." said Bortis, who transferred from Arkansas. "But that's how it is in Texas. They don't expect anything but the best."

Fields looked as if an oil rig had been lifted from his shoulders. He knew he had the players. He knew they could get it done. But he also knew they had to prove it. "I have learned something," he said. "And that is when you do get up there in the rarefied air – because we've finished third, fourth, fifth and ninth in the NCAAs the last six years – people start taking shots at you, and unfortunately that hurts your recruiting." "Honestly, it's tough, so this kind of thing kind of sets that right."

The Longhorns entered the week 57<sup>th</sup> in the *Golfweek*/Sagarin College Rankings, better only than host Central Florida. They had finished last at the Carpet Capital Collegiate by 18 shots to a similar field, but rebounded with a third-place finish at the Jerry Pate National Intercollegiate behind Alabama and Texas Tech. Fields also stressed early in the week his team "had the best qualifier we've had in five years," coming into the event. He reminded his players of that Monday night, as they sat on a one-shot lead over Oklahoma State with Florida, Clemson and two-time defending champion Georgia lurking. Fields pulled a folded and worn piece of notebook paper out of his back pocket, on which he and written each player's qualifying scores, and read them aloud. "And I said, you're ready to do this," Fields said. "Just go out and play good golf."

On a cold and overly windy Tuesday in Central Florida, the Longhorns closed with a 9-over 297 total, second only to third-place Texas A&M. The Aggies, led by junior Robert Gates' round-best-4-under 68, started the day 16<sup>th</sup>. Oklahoma State struggled, hurting the most it did all week from the absence of All-Americans Pablo Martin and Jonathan Moore, who are in South Africa for the World Amateur Team Championship along with Georgia's Chris Kirk, Florida's Andres Echavarria and South Carolina's Florian Fristch. The Cowboys finished 16 shots back in fourth as freshman Trent Whitekiller and Chris Ward, who had impressed coach Mike McGraw over the first two days, both shot rounds over 80. Harman said after the second round that Georgia would need three under-par rounds to win its third consecutive Isleworth title and break the Bulldogs' fall winless streak. But Tuesday's worsening conditions didn't allow anything quite that special, and they finished fifth.

The Orlando area experienced a record high of 91 degrees during the first round Sunday, and it saw a record low of 50 degrees Tuesday morning. The result was a stroke average four shots worse than the first two rounds, and only three under-par rounds. Harman's even-par 216 total was the highest by a medalist in the tournament's three-year history. "When the weather is good, it's good," said Harman, who held on with a final-round 75 for his first victory since tying for medalist honors in his Georgia debut at last year's Ping/*Golfweek* Preview. "But when it gets bad, it's bad. People don't realize a humid cold is cold. It just eats right through you, no matter how many layers you're wearing. It's brutal." It took Harman a while to warm up. The sophomore, one of two players to shoot under par both Sunday and Monday, started his final round 5 over through five holes. He bogeyed the first, and made double bogey on the treacherous par-2 second after hitting his tee shot into the water. He followed with bogeys on Nos. 4 and 5. "Those are just tough golf holes," said Harman of Isleworth's infamous opening stretch. "Once I got through there it was like a breath of fresh air." Harman calmed down with five consecutive pars, before making another bogey on No.11 that he said really got him "kind of down." Assistant coach Ryan Hybl came to the rescue. "He just needed a little boost," said Hybl, who knew that second-round leader Toby Ragland of Florida had fallen back. "On the 13<sup>th</sup> tee I told him if you get to even par, you'll probably win this tournament." Said Harman: "So I said to Hybl, walk this thing out with me and let's get it back to even." He birdied 13. Birdied 17. Hit "the best 4-iron of my life" on 18, and rolled in a 20-footer for birdie that ended up being the winning stroke.

Florida's Billy Horschel finished tied for second, missing his tying chip shot from the collection area behind the 18<sup>th</sup> green by just a couple inches. He tapped it in with his wedge for 71. "From where I was I thought it looked good," said Horschel, who opened the tournament with a 79 and followed it with a second-round 67 to get back into contention. The other runner-up, Wake Forest's Dustin Graves, made a 15-footer for birdie on his final hole (No.9), hoping it was enough. The redshirt freshman soon found out on his walk to the scoring trailer that his bogey on the previous hole had cost him. "Oh man," he said.

Rank	Team	Score	Player	Score
1	TEXAS	12	B	18
2	FLORIDA	24	F	18
3	TEXAS A&M	28	F	18
4	OKLAHOMA STATE	28	F	18
5	GEORGIA	28	F	18
6	CLEMSON	30	F	18
7	KENTUCKY	32	F	18
8	FLORIDA STATE	38	F	18
9	TENNESSEE	38	F	18
10	NORTH CAROLINA	38	F	18
11	WAKE FOREST	38	F	18
12	GEORGIA TECH	39	F	18
13	DWKE	41	F	18
14	GEORGIA STATE	42	F	18
15	ARIZONA	50	F	18
16	SOUTH CAROLINA	51	F	18
17	TEXAS TECH	53	F	18
18	UCF	60	F	18