



## **HOUSTON FIRES 2-UNDER 70 TO TAKE LEAD AT WOMEN'S WESTERN AMATEUR**

**LONG GROVE, Ill. (July 16, 2019)** – Julie Houston, of Allen, Texas, fired a two-under-par 70 Tuesday to take the first-round lead at the 119th Women's Western Amateur at Royal Melbourne Country Club in Long Grove, Illinois.

Houston graduated this past spring from the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she was the 2018 Female Athlete of the Year. This week marks her fourth and final appearance in the Women's Western Amateur, as she plans to turn pro after competing in the U.S. Women's Amateur in early August.

"I focused on hitting fairways and greens," Houston, 22, said of her opening day play. "I wasn't trying to achieve any number. I tried to take a deep breath and stay in the present."

For Wednesday's second round, she said, "I want to come out hot, like I did today, and finish even stronger."

Houston holds a one-stroke lead over Sarah Shipley, of Hastings, Michigan.

Shipley, a rising senior at the University of Kentucky, stressed how important hitting greens in regulation was for her today.

"If you hit greens, you'll be good," Shipley said. "You have to pick your spot and be specific."

This also is Shipley's fourth appearance at the Women's Western Amateur. For Wednesday, her goal is to go as low as she can.

"I try and take it three holes at a time. My goal is to stay even or make birdie through three holes," Shipley, 21, said of her course strategy. "After every three holes, I start fresh."

Tied for third at even-par 72 are: Ela Belen Anacona of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Tess Hackworthy, of Madison, Wisconsin; and Lauren Beaudreau, of Lemont, Illinois.

Wednesday's second round will start at 7:30 a.m.

Contestants from 30 states and 12 countries are vying for the W. A. Alexander Cup, which was first presented in 1901 in honor of his wife, the first president of the Women's Western Golf Association.

The list of past champions spans more than a century, from legendary stars Patty Berg (1938, 1946, 1947), Nancy Lopez (1976), Beth Daniel (1978) and Cristie Kerr (1994) to modern stars such as Brittany Lang (2003), Stacy Lewis (2006) and Ariya Jutanugarn (2012).

Starting this year, the WWGA is partnering with the Western Golf Association for the WWGA Amateur and Junior Championships. With this new affiliation, WGA staff are assisting the WWGA volunteer Directors with tournament operations.

The event opened with a field of 120 players with a USGA Handicap of 5.4 or less. Following Wednesday's second round, the field will be trimmed to 32 players for match play.

The opening two rounds of match play will be held on Thursday, with the quarterfinals and semifinals set for Friday. The winners in the semifinals will compete in the championship match Saturday morning.

[Full Leaderboard](#)

[Pairings](#)

For more information, visit [www.womenswesternamateur.com](http://www.womenswesternamateur.com).

### **About the WWGA**

The WWGA was founded in 1901 under the sponsorship of the Western Golf Association and is one of the oldest women's golf organizations in the United States; it is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established under guidelines set by the International Revenue Service. Each year, the WWGA hosts the Women's Western Amateur Championship and the Women's Western Junior Championship.

### **About the Western Golf Association**

The Western Golf Association was founded in 1899 by 11 Chicago-area golf clubs to promote their interests in golf. Headquartered in Golf, Illinois, the WGA promotes golf championships and scholarships, including fundraising support for the national Evans Scholars Program. In addition to assisting the WWGA in conducting the Women's Western Amateur and Women's Western Junior, the WGA conducts the BMW Championship on the PGA TOUR, the Western Amateur, the Western Junior and the Evans Scholars Invitational on the Korn Ferry Tour. To learn more, visit [www.wgaesf.org](http://www.wgaesf.org).