

FALLING ROCK CLASSIC ROUND ONE

FARMINGTON – Based on first glance, Chris Zumpano knows how to make an impression.

Playing in his first Tri-State Section PGA event Monday, the Falling Rock Classic, Zumpano posted the only under par round of the day, a 70 and takes a three-shot lead into Tuesday's final round.

The Classic was played on the newer Shepherd's Rock course on Monday and it will conclude Tuesday on the Mystic Rock course.

Zumpano's advantage is over his boss at Oakmont Country Club, Devon Gee, and Treesdale Golf & Country Club Director of Instruction Joe Boros.

Quite remarkable actually since Zumpano just started working as Oakmont's Director of Player Development and senior assistant on May.

"I was supposed to start in March but the COVID-19 shutdown delayed that," Zumpano, who spent the last six years at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, N.Y. as first assistant, said. "I'm excited to be here."

He didn't get to the resort until 10 p.m. Sunday and didn't see the course until Monday morning when he stuck his tee in the ground.

"Sometimes a course fits your eye and this one fit mine," he said after making five birdies and two bogeys. "I'm a very good player in general so it really didn't surprise me that I was a couple under par. I had qualified for the Club Pro Championship in Texas but that got cancelled. I shot 66 at Oakmont last week and I guess that travels pretty well."

Zumpano's five birdies led the field on a course that played to an average of 79.52 on a scorching hot day on the mountain.

Shepherd's Rock was built in 2017 as a complement to Mystic Rock which hosted PGA Tour events for a number of years. It played to 6,789 yards on Monday, while Mystic Rock will play to 6,739 Tuesday.

Neither Gee or Boros were jumping up and down at their rounds but realized they're in good position for the second round.

"I was pretty pleased with my score, but I got off to a lousy start, going three over through six holes," Gee said. "I left some putts out there so maybe I could have been a shot or two better."

"I played OK," Boros said. "There are always those shots you'd like to have back, but it's good to be out on the golf course again."

Zumpano, Gee and Boros will be the final group off the first tee Tuesday, starting at 9 a.m.

FALLING ROCK CLASSIC DAY 2

FARMINGTON – When Dan Rodgers talks, he should really listen.

At some point between the end of the first and beginning of the second round of the Falling Rock Classic, it came to Rodgers that a special round was awaiting him.

“I kept saying over and over, ‘I’m going to shoot 66, I’m going to shoot 66,’ Rodgers said.

As he stood over a 25-30 footer on the 18th hole Tuesday afternoon on the Mystic Rock course at Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, guess what? If he made the putt, he’d shoot a 66. And make it he did, putting an exclamation point on his first professional victory.

“Yesterday, I hit it pretty good, but I made a pair of bogeys to end the round for a 74,” Rodgers, who is the men’s and women’s golf coach at Carnegie Mellon University, said. “I got off to a quick start today and just played well.”

That quick start was quick indeed, with a birdie on the first, another on the fourth and then an eagle on the par five fifth. He turned at three under par and posted another three-under on the back.

“I made a really good save on 17,” Rodgers said. “I hit my tee shot well right and hit a really good 30-yard chip shot to save par. I hit a 9-iron into the 18th green and then had that putt.”

Overcoming an opening-round 74 on a course as difficult as Mystic Rock to post a 66 and win by four shots over Joe Boros of Treedsdale was no small feat. But it certainly wasn’t easy.

“I had some easy putts but it was tough, especially with Joe and Devin (Gee) closing in,” Rodgers said. “That made me a little uncomfortable.”

Boros got his round off to a quick start, making birdies on the third through sixth holes and then the eighth and 10th holes. A bogey on the 12th stalled his momentum but his run officially ended when he double-bogeyed the difficult par three 17th.

“My tee shot was short of the green but I saw the area where the ball kicked,” Boros said. “We just couldn’t find the ball. It’s OK, though. It was great to be out there competing.”

Boros had battled arthritis in his thumb for a while and finally was able swing without pain.

Gee, head professional at Oakmont Country Club, fought his own battle over the two days as well, although his was with his putter.

“Both days, I just couldn’t get the speed on these greens,” he said. “That was tough.”

First-round leader Chris Zumpano, an Oakmont Country Club assistant, also struggled, putting up a 76 after an opening-round 70.

Rodgers and Boros were the only two players to post subpar rounds and finish the tournament under par. Mystic Rock played almost a full shot easier than it had in the first round.

The Tri-State Section PGA will host the Pittsburgh Open next Monday and Tuesday at South Hills Country Club.