

BC3 golfer Skerbetz in early chase for All-American status

June 4, 2019

(Chautauqua, N.Y.) Butler County Community College sophomore Tucker Skerbetz rebounded from a front-nine double bogey to post a 7-over 79 Tuesday in the first round of the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III national championships and, tied for 18th place, is in early contention for All-American status.

Skerbetz, a graduate of Laurel High School, finished the first of four rounds 4 strokes off the lead at Chautauqua Golf Club's Lake Course, where the top 18 golfers after Friday's final round become All-Americans.

"Tucker is in the mix at 79," BC3 coach Bill Miller said. "He could have easily had a 76 or 77 today. The more he sees this course, I think he is very capable of continuing that run."

Sean McGarvey, of Rockland Community College, Suffern, N.Y., and Hunter Moen and Blake Bloedorn, of Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Fergus Falls, Minn., led a field of 85 golfers nationwide with first-round 75s.

BC3, coming off its fourth NJCAA Division III Region XX crown, is in seventh place among 11 teams with a 336, 22 strokes behind Sandhills Community College, Pinehurst, N.C.

Noah Morgan, a BC3 sophomore and Allegheny-Clarion Valley High graduate, shot an 81; Carmen Oliva, a freshman from Neshannock High, an 83; Luke Ostermeyer, a sophomore and Laurel High graduate, a 93; and Tyler Johnson, a sophomore and graduate of Armstrong High, a 97.

Only the top four scores of each player are tallied in the team standings.

Skerbetz overcame a double bogey on the 425-yard, par-4 No. 7, flanked by trees on either side of the fairway, to pull into a four-way tie for 18th place with Luke Schwartz, of Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, Md.; Trey May, Georgia Military College, Milledgeville, Ga.; and Nevin Bullough, of Sandhills Community College.

"It's a tough hole," Skerbetz said. "It is very visually demanding. Off the tee it is very narrow, and there are a lot of trees, so you have to be extremely accurate off the tee. That was the worst hole of the day."



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Forty-one golfers bogeyed No. 7, where trees surround the green; 10 double-bogeyed the hole and four fared even worse.

“Tucker hit one that went into the woods line,” Miller said of Skerbetz on No. 7. “It wasn’t out of bounds, but it took a couple to get out. That was kind of a tough break. He could have easily had a 76, 77 with a few breaks here or there.”

Skerbetz is shooting for even better in the second through fourth rounds.

“I’m looking for a 74 or a 75,” said Skerbetz, who Tuesday had two birdies and nine pars. “I think I can shoot even par. I’m just going to have to buckle down. It is definitely not an easy course.”

BC3 has been awarded five All-American honors in golf, most recently Thomas Dimun and Stefan Carlsson in 2015.

Carlsson, of Knoch, finished 15th and Dimun, of Butler, 16th, at Chautauqua Golf Club in 2015, when the Pioneers placed sixth as a squad.