

## Trinity King hangs on to lead after second round thanks to two-shot swing on last hole at Ridglea



Trinity King

They weren't playing in the same threesome Tuesday so Trinity King and Alexandra Batista didn't quite realize the significance of their results at the 485-yard par-5 18th at Ridglea Country Club until they finished play. King, the 13-year-old who held a four-stroke lead in the Fort Worth Girls City Junior Golf Championship after Monday's first round at Woodhaven C.C., sank a four-foot putt for a birdie to finish with a six-over par 78 and salvage a one-shot 36-hole lead.



Batista, 16, playing in the threesome behind King, slipped to only her second bogey of the day at 18 to close with an even-par 72. The two-shot swing on the hole allowed King to maintain the lead at 150 over the charging Batista's 151 as they head to Wednesday's final round at River Crest Country Club. Batista had nudged into the lead just the hole before, the 173-yard par 3 17th when she parred and King bogeyed. But it turned out to be a short-lived lead.

"I beat last year's score here," said a smiling and relieved King, who had a 79 at Ridglea en route to tying for fourth last year. Now, King hopes she can significantly beat last year's score at River Crest for the final round. She stumbled to an 87 there last year and said she had lost focus as she dropped from second. Batista had a much better outcome at River Crest last year by shooting a 74, which earned her the runner-up spot.

Still in the title hunt this year are Maddie White, who's five shots back, and Tai Barber, six shots behind. White, 16, of Fort Worth shot a 78, which included a triple-bogey 7 on the 370-yard par-4 10th hole. White was having trouble judging the breaks in the greens on her first try around the course. "They broke more than they looked like," she said. Barber, of Grapevine, got off to a rocky start with a double-bogey on the 500-yard par-5 No. 1 hole, and also carded a 78.

"I'd like to play that hole again," Batista said of the 18th, a hole that King almost reached in two and which is considered a birdie hole. King pitched (pictured above) within about four feet and sank the putt for the birdie and the difference in the lead.

But Batista was happy with her play, especially at the start when she birdied the first two holes (the 430-yard second is a par 5 for the girls, who played from the White tees, which made for a 6,097-yard trek). Batista was seven shots behind starting the day, but moved within three after the first three holes as King opened with a bogey, followed by a birdie and then stumbled to a double-bogey 6 on the 340-yard par-4 third hole. Her tee shot found trees, her second shot caught a greenside trap and, after blasting out, it took her three more to finally finish the hole.

Gabrielle Tomanka, 13, from Gapevine was in second, four shots behind, starting the day, but she opened with two consecutive bogeys and stumbled to a double-bogey on the 510-yard par 5 ninth, and then struggled to an 8 on the 320-yard par 4 11th to drop from contention with an 88 and 164 total.

King shot a 40 on the front and lost five shots to Batista's 35 and was only two shots ahead going into the back. Batista gained shots at 13, 15 and 17. At the par-4 13th, her bogey was one better than King's second double of the day. Then Batista parred the 17th and King bogeyed and suddenly she was one back heading into the 18th. King, playing in the threesome ahead of Batista, placed her second shot to just a few yards short of the green, then pitched up and sank her putt.

King said her start was shaky. "It was a little nerve-wracking. I was thinking I might lose my lead," she said. But she quickly began focusing on her game and "quit worrying about the lead." She just wanted to focus on her ball and do the best she could "and that 78 was my best today."

Batista said the difference between her opening 79 and the 72 was "I gave up on myself a lot yesterday after I'd hit a bad shot." But the two opening birdies Tuesday perked her up and she's looking forward to playing River Crest. "Last year, I improved every day. And I like River Crest."

Batista and King both have something in common this year. Both are longer off the tee than last year. King's growth spurt of three to four inches has helped her stretch her drives from 190 to 200 yards to 220 to 245. "I noticed on some of the holes that I was hitting hybrids to last year, I was hitting irons this year," King said. Batista said she's added about 10 yards from last year and is driving about 235 to 250.

Division I, which played at Ridglea, was cut into the Championship and First flights for Wednesday's final rounds. Division II, which was played at Diamond Oaks C.C., was cut into the Second and Third flights and they'll finish at Rockwood G.C. Division III, which began nine-home competition Tuesday, was cut into the Fourth, Fifth and Six Flights. The regular 9-hole division has been cut to the Championship and First flights. Those flights will finish at Sycamore Creek G.C.