

Johnson sets the pace

AFP | Carnoustie, United Kingdom

Former champion Zach Johnson survived miserable conditions and birdied the 18th for the second day running to seize the clubhouse lead at the British Open, but Tommy Fleetwood and Rory McIlroy also excelled at Carnoustie yesterday.

The 42-year-old Johnson, who won the Claret Jug at St Andrews in 2015, followed his 69 in the first round with a second-round 67 in the rain, as he moved to six under par for the tournament.

He recovered from a bogey at the first hole of his morning round with five birdies and no more dropped shots after that to lead by a stroke in the clubhouse from Fleetwood.

"The reverence I have for this championship and specifically that trophy, that Claret Jug, I'm not suggesting that someone doesn't have a higher reverence for it, but I'd argue with them," said Iowa native Johnson, who had made the cut at 11 straight Opens before this one.

"I'm not going to sit here and say, man, I just love playing in the wind and rain because I don't, but I can do it, you know."

Fleetwood, who was raised



England's Tommy Fleetwood plays from the rough

on links golf, had briefly surged to the top of the leaderboard at the end of his second round, starting the day one over par before shooting a brilliant six-under-par 65 to go to five-under overall.

That put him level with overnight leader Kevin Kisner of the United States, who went out in the afternoon looking to benefit from calmer, drier weather.

Fleetwood also capped his round with a birdie at the difficult 18th hole on the Scottish

links. That was his sixth birdie of a round that was not blemished by a single bogey, with the 27-year-old showing how comfortable he is at a venue where he holds the course record following a 63 at last year's Dunhill Championship.

Now right in contention, Fleetwood is dreaming of becoming the first English golfer to lift the Claret Jug since Nick Faldo in 1992.

"If I could pick one tournament in my life to win, it would

be The Open," admitted Fleetwood, who was unable to properly challenge in last year's Open on his home course at Royal Birkdale.

"We are only halfway through the tournament unfortunately. You've got 36 holes to go but there's no point thinking about the end game."

McIlroy went out shortly before 8am and shot his second successive 69 to go to four-under for the tournament, alongside South Africa's Erik van Rooyen in sitting two shots off the clubhouse lead.

The Northern Irishman, looking for his first major since 2014, had four birdies for the day as well as dropped shots at the 13th and 14th holes, and was happy with his effort.

"In those conditions I would've taken that score today going out. It wasn't that bad, but it was just damp enough and cold enough that the game plan that I was trying to adapt to be aggressive and hit driver a lot, I just couldn't do it," he said.

"There is still a long way to go, but I'm in a great position going into the third day."

Woods fails to ignite

However, it is looking a little less likely that this tournament will finally be the one where

Tiger Woods ends his decade-long major drought, as he shot a second straight even-par round of 71.

"I played a little bit better yesterday. Today wasn't quite as good," he admitted, before insisting: "It will be a pretty packed leaderboard, and I'm certainly right there in it."

At least he will be here for the weekend, in contrast to world number one Dustin Johnson, whose underwhelming 72 leaves him six over par for the tournament. The last world number one to miss the Open cut was England's Luke Donald at Royal St George's seven years ago.

Ireland's Pádraig Harrington, who won the last Open here in 2007, is eight-over and will also miss the cut, along with Spain's Sergio Garcia, who he beat in a play-off 11 years ago and is four-over now.



US golfer Zach Johnson reacts after making a birdie putt on the 18th green

Brighton sign Tau



Percy Tau

London, United Kingdom

Brighton signed South Africa star Percy Tau from Mamelodi Sundowns on Friday, with the Premier League club set to send the forward on loan for the coming season.

Tau agreed a four-year contract with the Seagulls after emerging as the hottest prospect in South Africa.

The 24-year-old striker is the first South African in the English Premier League since Steven Pienaar, who left Sunderland in 2017 after spells with Everton and Tot-

tenham.

Tau has made 12 international appearances for South Africa, scoring five goals, and was the country's player of the season in 2017-18.

"This move should help me play more international football," Taus said. "I'll be learning a lot, which will also be good for my country. 'Hopefully I can make some great memories here - I love making memories and I'm so happy to be here.'"

Tau won the South African title twice with Sundowns, as a fringe player in 2014 but as a regular last season.

Marseille snap up Caleta-Car

Marseille, France

Croatian central defender Duje Caleta-Car has signed a five-year contract with French club Marseille for an undisclosed fee, the club announced Friday.

A member of the Croatian squad which lost to France in the World Cup final on July 15, Caleta-Car, 21 moves to Marseille after playing four seasons for Austria's Red Bull Salzburg.

Media reports said Marseille paid around 20 million



Duje Caleta-Car

Euros for the powerful young centre back who helped the Swiss side reach the semi-finals of the Europa League last season.

Caleta-Car made his World Cup debut for Croatia in their third group match against Iceland.

Lamela in Tottenham until 2022

London, United Kingdom

Erik Lamela became the latest Tottenham star to sign a new contract as the Argentine playmaker agreed a four-year deal with the north London club yesterday.

Lamela's new terms will keep him at Tottenham until 2022 as he followed in the footsteps of Son Heung-min and Harry Kane, who have also signed improved deals since the end of last season.

"We are delighted to announce that Erik Lamela has signed a new contract with the Club, which will run until 2022," a statement on Tottenham's website said.

Lamela made his comeback from injury last November and went on to make 33 appearances, scoring four goals including a brace on the final day of the season against Leicester.



Erik Lamela

The 26-year-old joined Tottenham from Roma in 2013 and has since scored 23 goals in 154 appearances.

Lamela has 23 caps and three goals at international level for Argentina since making his debut in 2011.

He began his pre-season with a first-half hat-trick in Tottenham's friendly against Southampton and will be part of the club's pre-season tour of the United States.

Neymar staying at PSG

Sao Paulo, Brazil

Brazilian superstar Neymar on Thursday sought to quash speculation about his future, insisting he planned to remain with French giants Paris Saint-Germain.

"I'm staying, I'm staying in Paris, I have a contract," Neymar told reporters at an auction to raise money for his charitable foundation in Sao Paulo.

Neymar, who became the world's most expensive footballer last year after moving to PSG from Barcelona in a record \$264 million deal, has repeatedly been linked to a move to Real Madrid.

The European champions have issued a series of statements denying they have an interest in signing the 26-year-old striker. Speculation of a Neymar move to the Bernabeu has intensified in the wake of Cristiano Ronaldo's shock move to Juventus, a development that has left a vacancy at Madrid for an elite, superstar player.

Chelsea prepare for life under Sarri

Perth, Australia

Chelsea players have backed new manager Maurizio Sarri's plan for a more fluid and attacking brand of football starting with Monday's pre-season friendly against Perth Glory in Australia.

Sarri, who was appointed on a three-year deal following Antonio Conte's sacking last week, said he didn't know what to expect from his new side in their first outing under him.

"We started only four days ago. So I hope to do the best. But I don't know how is our best at the moment," Sarri told reporters in Perth on Friday.

Sarri has vowed to bring flowing football to Chelsea, and that's music to the ears of Spanish international midfielder Cesc Fabregas.



Maurizio Sarri

"It's a way of football that I believe in, that I really like, that I grew up in this system," Fabregas said.

"For the type of player like myself, we can take a lot of advantage."

Fabregas, who is in Australia along with David Luiz, Pedro and new signing Jorginho,

made a plea for Belgian midfielder star Eden Hazard to stay at Stamford Bridge.

"I think he's our best player," Fabregas said.

Chelsea's Spanish defender Marcos Alonso said the squad will be keen to make an early impression on Sarri in the side's first pre-season match of the year.

"We have just started with the new manager and it will be a good test to see how we are and to keep learning things and improving with the new manager," Alonso told reporters.

"We will try to start playing how the manager wants, for sure."

It is the Premier League's club's first visit to Perth since 1974, and more than 45,000 fans are expected for the game at Optus Stadium.

Liverpool gets Alisson

Liverpool, United Kingdom

Liverpool on Thursday signed Brazil goalkeeper Alisson from Roma in a world record deal valued at 72.5 million euros by the Italian club.

"The 25-year-old signed a long-term contract with the Reds after undergoing a medical and completing the formalities of his switch at (training centre) Melwood today," said the Liverpool website.

Roma confirmed the value of the transfer for Alisson who featured at the World Cup in Russia.