

golf

Four lead at 3-under in Florida Open play

■ Scores, tee times, 2-C
By KEVIN THOMAS
Times Staff Writer

TARPON SPRINGS — Florida Open golfers Thursday looked like Lotto players who had lost their winning tickets.

Missed opportunities were the story of the day.

With no wind, a bright sun, and beautifully-conditioned Innisbrook Resort golf courses, low scores were there for the shooting. But only 15 players broke par in the Open's first round.

When John Huston of Palm Harbor came in the clubhouse early with his 3-under 69, he figured he was okay. "I shouldn't be too far back," he said.

Instead, Huston is in back of no one. He and three others share the lead. Huston and John Morse of Casselberry both shot 69s on the par-72 Island course. Greg Kraft of Clearwater and Don Reese of Palm Beach Gardens shot 3-under 68s on the par-71 Copperhead course.

Golfers will switch courses today, then play the last two rounds Saturday and Sunday on the Island course.

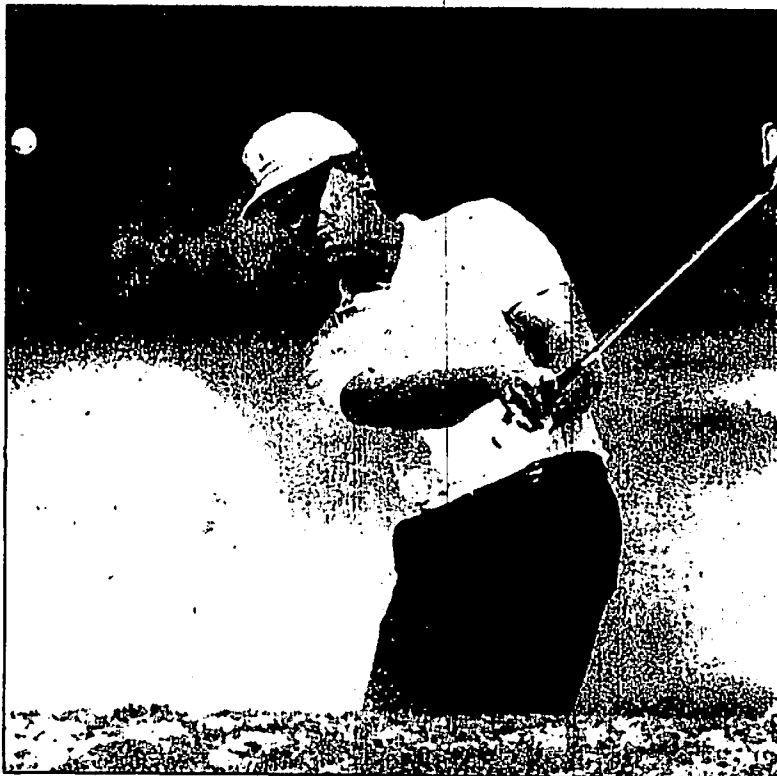
Behind the leaders is a group of four at 2-under, and a crowd of seven at 1-under. Miami's Bruce Fleisher, the defending champion, was one of 11 players at even par.

Huston, 26, a rookie member of the PGA Tour who won this tournament in 1985, was both awesome and awful. He scored six birdies and an eagle, but also had three bogeys and a double bogey.

"It's just frustrating to make so many birdies and shoot 3-under," Huston said. "It's the way it's been all year. If I started hitting better, I could score way under."

Huston, who started play on the back nine, was rolling at 5-under at one point, with the help of a 30-foot eagle putt on No. 2. But on No. 7, another par 5, Huston sent his tee shot into the woods.

"I tried to hit it out and it went about a foot," said Huston, who took a 7 on the



Times photo — STEVE HASEL

Defending champ Bruce Fleisher, who shot 72, hits out of a bunker Thursday.

hole, dropping to 3-under.

Morse, the other leader from the Island course, also had a forgettable finish. After going 6-under, Morse bogeyed three of his last five holes.

"It leaves a real sour taste in your mouth," said Morse, 30, one of the leading money leaders on the Florida mini-tour.

The Copperhead course leaders may have the early advantage since the Island is considered the easier course. Of the 15 par-breakers Thursday, 10 came from the Island.

Reese, a club pro, had four birdies and sole possession of the lead until he bogeyed the last hole. Kraft, a mini-tour player who finished second here last year, had no bogeys and made three birdies, none from more than 12 feet away.

"My game is more positioning, and that's the key out here," Kraft said. "The big difference is putting and chipping. I've never gone through Copperhead without a bogey. . . . I'm just happy to get Copperhead out of the way."

Kraft, 24, a Brandon High graduate who plays the mini-tours, had been struggling lately and returned last week to his

pro, M.G. Orender of Diamond Hill.

"He still does a lot for me," Kraft said. "He worked mostly with me thinking positive and not trying to do too much with the ball."

But Kraft did enough with the ball, unlike most of the field. Even those who did a few positive things couldn't maintain the pace, including six golfers who were 2-under or better for nine holes, but finished over par.

Medalist eliminated in Junior Amateur play

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — William Power of Richmond, Va., parred the 18th hole Thursday to eliminate medalist Brad Lehmann of Louisville, Ky., 1-up and advance to the third round of the 41st U.S. Junior Amateur Championship.

Power, 17, held a two-hole lead with three holes to play, but Lehmann won the 16th and 17th to square the match at the Yale University Golf Course. But Power won the match by making par while Lehmann put his drive on the 616-yard 18th hole into a water hazard and took a bogey-6.

Six sh top sp

Associated Press

GRAND BLANC, I plank, trying to live u showed by winning a P years-ago while still 6-under-par 66 Thursd. the first-round lead in Open.

Fred Couples, Scot cher, Tim Simpson and tied with Verplank afte Warwick Hills Golf and

All but Verplank pl par-72 course in the heavy rainstorm, when

Mike Sullivan, Jim H were one stroke back at

Verplank started Th 401-yard 10th hole an 5-foot putt for a bogey.

Verplank got that s rolled in a 25-footer for 190-yard par-3, and ne ping the round with a plugged bunker lie on the hole, where he holed a

"I tried to go out Verplank said. "I've be and haven't enjoyed play today and not give a ho time.

"I've been trying to

Neumani

Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. — fresh off a U.S. Women's Thursday she hopes to gi to the new Greater Wa her second LPGA tour weeks.

"I would like to do man said while competi for the 54-hole tourna today at the Bethesda Co can continue my success

Neumann is basking her first LPGA victory, umph over Patty Shee Baltimore. The golfer fi den, earned \$70,000 fo jumped her to 22nd on th list.

If she is to repeat her

July 29

Moby. Conn., 10 Sur. 7
Palo Bring, 0, and N A
New, 10000 May, Calif
Wive ance back, 001.
K. Ph. York and 113 chor. 0000. stan, Ohio

Cor. que. bgs. Calif
Alto, John Hart
Chad the Dou- N C
man work
Jaw. 000. and 11 rton, Jan. 0000. 0000

SUMMER GOLF SPECIALS

- \$15⁰⁰ Weekends
- \$13⁰⁰ Weekdays
- \$11⁰⁰ Every Day After 1 PM

FRIDAY NIGHT IS FAMILY NIGHT

120 WITH THIS TICKET
ADULTS 2 ADULTS 2 KIDS UNDER 10
GOLFERS OPEN 5 PM - 10 PM (LIMIT 2 PM)

SPORTS U

"YOU CAN'T BEAT OUR SEL"