

100% Cotton winner: Illinois' Ogren
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Mark Ogren parlayed a semifinal reprieve into a championship.

Ogren dodged elimination in his morning semifinal match with Brandon DeStefano when the SMU junior three-putted from four feet on the second playoff hole to advance to the championship match.

From there, Ogren took care of business and Creighton Honeck to capture the 55th annual W.E. Cole Cotton State Invitational at Bayou DeSiard Country Club Saturday afternoon.

"On the second extra hole (DeStefano) stuffed it and I hit my shot 30 feet from the hole," said Ogren, a University of Illinois golfer. "I two-putted and he let the first one get away and three-putted. "I was kind of like 'Wow'. It was pretty unusual, especially for as good of a player as Brandon is."

Ogren, a second-team All-Big 10 selection this past season, wasn't about to waste his good fortune. In the championship match against Honeck, Ogren was machine-like in his impressive 5 & 4 victory.



Terrance Armstard/The News-Star

Mark Ogren captured the 55th Cotton States title Saturday.

"I felt like I played pretty well," said Ogren, who carded two birdies and two bogeys in the final match. "It all came out at the end."

Ogren won two of the first holes as Honeck struggled with his putter, bogeying three out of the first four.

But Honeck, who defeated University of Tulsa golfer Rob Laird in the semifinals, rallied back with consecutive birdies on Nos. 6 and 7 to draw even.

"I felt really good after that and then on eight I missed my shot," Honeck said. "I never felt real solid over the ball." Honeck bogeyed eight to fall one hole back and then watched as Ogren seized the opportunity to make his move.

On the par 3 ninth, Ogren rolled in a 15-foot uphill birdie putt to make the turn with a

two-hole lead, then mashed the accelerator on the back.

"I hadn't made anything all day and then for me to see one go in, that jump started me," Ogren said.

Then on the par-4 10th — a severe dogleg left — Ogren delivered what would be a critical blow.

Honeck hit a perfect drive and found himself in the middle of the fairway. Ogren had pulled his shot left and had a big oak tree in his path. Ogren promptly worked a beautiful iron shot from right to left, around the tree, and deposited his ball 12-feet from the cup. Honeck pulled his left into a greenside bunker on the short side of the pin.

Honeck bogeyed and Ogren tapped in for par to take a three-hole lead.

"The shot on 10 gave me a lot of confidence," Ogren said. "After I hit it up there I figured we would tie the hole, but then to walk off three up was a good feeling."

Ogren's putter then began to heat up. After Honeck knocked down a 15-footer to save par, Ogren covered him up by sinking a 10-foot par putt of his own.

Then on 12 Ogren knocked down a 12-foot birdie putt to go up four holes with six to play. The match ended on the par-5 14th when Honeck's second shot found the water on the right, leading to a double bogey.

"He played great," Honeck said. "My hat is off to him. He putted like a champion and carried himself great."

The match was also a contrast in styles between the long-hitting Honeck, a 6-3, 240-pounder and the 5-9 Ogren, who made up for his lack of length with accuracy. Ogren constantly found himself hitting away from the fairway.

"It's difficult, but you've got to go out there and know he's going to be in front of me and not let it bother you play," Ogren said. "You've got to believe you can beat him."

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