

Ding, Liu Lead by one at 27th Volvo China Open in Shenzhen

Two players share the lead after the opening round of the 27th Volvo China Open.

SHENZHEN, GUANGDONG, CHINA, December 16, 2021 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- Yanwei Liu and teenage amateur Wenyi Ding share the lead at the Volvo China Open after shooting opening rounds of three-under par 69 at Genzon Golf Club in Shenzhen.

Just two shots separate fourteen players going into day two, and while the more experienced Liu also carded

an opening 69 (-3) it was the towering figure of Ding who caught the eye playing alongside the tournament's marquee name Haotong Li.

“

My reading of the greens has improved a lot and the putter was working well so it's an acceptable start. But I play a lot here and I'm familiar with the course. Three-under should have been five.”

Wenyi Ding, Volvo China Open co-leader



Seventeen-year old Wenyi Ding is co-leader of the 2021 Volvo China Open after round one

The decision by event organisers to play China's National Open behind closed doors because of the pandemic may well have benefitted many of the 14 amateurs in the 108-man field, including Ding - already the China Tour's youngest-ever winner.

"I wasn't great off the tee today so I missed a lot of birdie opportunities," said the 17-year-old from Beijing whose four birdies were marred by a bogey on the penultimate hole of his impressive opening round over the 7,145-yard course.

And Ding, who claimed his maiden China Tour victory in

May only months after finishing runner-up at the 2020 Volvo China Open aged just 16, believed it could have been so much better.

"My reading of the greens has improved a lot and the putter was working well so it's an acceptable start to the tournament. But because I play a lot here, I'm very familiar with the course and three-under should have been five."

Sharing the lead with the high-flying teenager is 24-year-old Liu who finished third behind Ding in last year's Volvo China Open. "My long game was good today and I made very few mistakes," he said. "There was little wind out there but if it picks up there will be some challenges especially on the closing holes."

Liu currently sits in third place on the China Tour Prize Money list and is clearly focused on what is the grand finale of the China Tour season. "I came early to prepare as this is such an important tournament as well as being the last event of the year. But I'm not thinking too much about the ranking as it all depends on how the other players perform. It is more important I focus on my own game."

For 2016 Volvo China Open champion Haotong Li, the dream of becoming the first Chinese double-winner of his national Open remains very much alive. An up-and-down round produced five birdies and three bogies as the two-time DP World Tour winner opened with a two-under par 70 and a share of third place one shot off the lead.

"I didn't set a goal today because I haven't played a tournament in a long time," said Li, one of six players on two-under. "There was a nice run of four birdies in five holes from the sixth onwards and I made a number of long putts to save par."

Elsewhere, it was a disappointing start to the season finale for the two men at the top of the China Tour Prize Money Ranking List.



An opening round of 69 gives Yanwei Liu a share of the lead at the Volvo China Open



Former champion Haotong Li is one shot behind the leaders of the Volvo China Open after an opening 70 (-2)

Volvo China Open defending champion and number one on the Ranking List, Zhang Huilin carded an opening 75 (+3), while Hong Kong's Hak Shun Yat settled for a one-over par 73. The player who ends the season at the top of the 2020-2021 Ranking List will automatically receive full playing rights for the 2022 DP World Tour.

The second round of the 2021 Volvo China Open will get underway at 7.15am on Friday (December 17).

Now in its 27th consecutive year, the Volvo China Open is the season finale of the 2021 China Tour and the longest-running professional golf tournament on the Chinese mainland. The Volvo China Open, hosted by the China Golf Association and Guangdong Provincial Sports Bureau, is promoted and operated by Teamfirst Management Ltd., and certified by the China Tour.

Ends

Volvo China Open - leading scores after 18 holes

-3 *Ding, Yanwei Liu

-2 Li, Ye, Zhang, Yue Liu, Zehao Liu, Huang

-1 Chen, *Tang, Luo, Chun Liu, He, Fan

* Denotes amateur player

(All China nationality unless stated otherwise)

Alan Ewens

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