



The Open Championship 2026 Moving Day: Burns Leads, Fox Shoots 62 and Fleetwood Charges at Birkdale

Description

After two days of breathtaking scoring that shattered records at Royal Birkdale, The Open Championship 2026 Moving Day produced yet more drama on the famous Lancashire links. Sam Burns of the United States has seized the overnight lead at nine-under-par, with New Zealander Ryan Fox – the author of another sensational Saturday 62 – lurking just one shot behind. Hometown favourite Tommy Fleetwood is in the hunt at seven-under, threatening to deliver one of sport’s great storybook endings on home soil.

The Open Championship 2026 Moving Day: How the Leaderboard Stands



Source: The Open official website (theopen.com)

The Saturday evening leaderboard at Royal Birkdale makes for gripping reading ahead of the final round:

- **Sam Burns (USA)** 9-under (leader)

- **Ryan Fox (New Zealand)** 8-under (-1)
- **Tommy Fleetwood (England)** 7-under (-2)
- **Lucas Herbert (Australia)** 7-under (-2)
- **Cameron Young (USA)** 7-under (-2)
- **Si Woo Kim (South Korea)** 7-under (-2)
- **Scottie Scheffler (USA)** 4-under (-5)
- **Rory McIlroy (Northern Ireland)** 2-under (-7)

After [Friday's extraordinary Round 2](#), in which both Herbert and Burns shot record-equalling 62s, Saturday's third round maintained the astonishing standard set over the week's opening two days.

Fox Shoots Another 62: Royal Birkdale's Record-Breaking Week

If Friday belonged to Herbert and Burns, Saturday was the day Ryan Fox gate-crashed the history books. The New Zealander – playing with the freedom of a man with nothing to lose – carded nine birdies against a solitary bogey to post yet another 62, the third of the week at Birkdale and the joint-lowest score ever recorded in a major championship. Fox recovered brilliantly from a bogey at the 13th, reeling off birdies at 14, 16 and 17 to finish with a flourish that sent the gallery into raptures.



Source: The Open official website (theopen.com)

Royal Birkdale has now produced three rounds of 62 in a single Open Championship – a feat without precedent in the Championship’s 154-year history. The course, renowned for its towering dunes and punishing rough, has paradoxically played to the strength of the game’s most precise ball-strikers, with scoring averages well below par throughout the week.

Tommy Fleetwood’s Home-Town Dream

Perhaps the most compelling subplot of this Open is Tommy Fleetwood’s charge at a home crowd that has waited years to see him contend at the links down the road from Southport, where he grew up.

Fleetwood's third-round 69 including birdies at the 5th, 7th and a crucial 11th lifted him to seven-under and within two of the lead.

The Southport native was briefly within one shot of the co-leaders at the turn, but two dropped shots over his final four holes interrupted the fairytale narrative. Make no mistake, though: with the partisan gallery roaring his name and the Claret Jug two shots away, Sunday promises to be one of the most electric days The Open has seen in years.

Mcllroy and Scheffler Fall Behind

World number one Scottie Scheffler, who had the field watching early in the week, has drifted back to four-under and finds himself five shots off the pace heading into the final round. Rory Mcllroy, the sentimental favourite of every neutral, followed Friday's 67 with a steady 69 but sits at two-under seven shots adrift of Burns and facing an almost impossible task on Sunday.

Mcllroy and Scheffler will tee off far from the final groups, their challenge now is to apply pressure from the front and hope the leaderboard gets complicated behind them.

What to Expect on Final Day at Royal Birkdale

With five players within two shots of the lead and a course that rewards bold, attacking golf, Sunday's final round has the makings of an all-time classic. Burns has nerves of steel his hole-out from a bunker on Friday demonstrated that while Fox's 62 suggests he plays his best when the stakes are highest. And Fleetwood? The prospect of a Southport boy lifting the Claret Jug in front of his home crowd would rank among the most emotional moments in Open history.

This [154th Open Championship began with high expectations](#) and has already exceeded them. Follow all the action from the final round tee times begin in the early afternoon BST on R&A TV and the official Open app.

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