

Russell shoots 69 to win 2nd straight Atlanta Open

By Glenn Sheeley

STAFF WRITER

If Matt Russell's dominance in the Yamaha Atlanta Open is an indicator of his future performance, he isn't long for the Hooters Tour. More likely, there is a Nike Tour or PGA Tour awaiting him and an eventual upgrade from Ramada life to the Ritz.

Adding a 69 to his opening, course-record 64, the 23-year-old Russell captured his second straight Atlanta Open Tuesday at the Cherokee Town & Country Club, finishing at 11-under-par 133 with two closing birdies and winning by three shots over Cherokee's David Bahr (68-68-136).

"It's definitely a confidence boost for me," said Russell, a former Berry College All-American who prevailed last year as an amateur.

"I'm leaving tonight for Dallas [and this week's Hooters Tour event]. Hopefully, I can go out there and do the same."

Bahr reduced Russell's lead to two shots with a birdie at the 16th hole, but Russell eased the tension with a 25-footer for birdie at the 17th and a two-putt birdie at the par-5 18th.

A former Marist High player from Dunwoody who plays out of the Atlanta Athletic Club, Russell got up-and-down from 130 yards at the 13th hole and had a sand save at the 15th.

"Yesterday everything worked," Russell said. "Today, I had to scramble a lot more."

The \$7,000 paycheck was the

largest of Russell's career and a boost for his Hooters Tour budget, where the weekly entry fee is \$500. Struggling more than would seem logical on the chicken wing circuit, he missed four straight cuts in June.

His best Hooters finish, a tie for 16th in Atlanta last year, earned \$1,600.

Low amateur went to Jedd McLuen of Whispering Pines Golf Course in Colbert, who shot a 67 to finish at 5-under 139, tying for third with 1994 winner Kevin Blanton of Moultrie (67) and Russell Smith of Brookstone (70).

Tied for sixth at 4-under were Tommy Brannen of the Atlanta Athletic Club, Tim Weinhart of Berkeley Hills, Bill Price of Champions Club of Atlanta, Mike Gill of Maple Ridge Golf Club and Sea Island's Mike Cook.

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Yamaha Atlanta Open

Tuesday, at Cherokee Town & Country Club

Final Standings

Matt Russell	64-69-133
David Bahr	68-68-136
(a) Jedd McLuen	72-67-139
Kevin Blanton	72-67-139
Russell Smith	69-70-139
Bill Price, Jr.	72-68-140
Tim Weinhart	72-68-140
Tommy Brannen	71-69-140
Mike Gill	70-70-140
Mike Cook	69-71-140
John Fesperman, Jr.	72-69-141
John Godwin	73-68-141
(a) Harold Wyatt III	71-70-141
Bill Spannuth	70-71-141
Louis Brown	70-71-141
Cutts Benedict	69-72-141
David Dixon	69-72-141
(a) Bryan Hancock	74-67-141
Danny Elkins	72-70-142
Rob Williams	68-74-142
David O'Connor	70-73-143
(a) Kevin Durkin	69-74-143
Todd Peterson	69-74-143
Drew Pittman Jr.	69-74-143
(a) Spencer Sappington	74-69-143
Richard Hatcher	76-68-144
(a) Jack Hall	72-72-144
(a) Stan Gann Jr.	71-73-144
Phil Taylor	73-71-144
Gene Matthews	71-73-144
Tom Zachary Jr.	73-71-144
Craig Hartle	71-73-144
Richard Crawford	70-74-144
Craig Stevens	70-74-144
(a) Mark Gunthorpe	70-74-144
Bill Connally	77-68-145
James Mason	77-68-145
Bill Paiter	72-73-145
(a) David Polds	73-72-145
Steve Ridge	71-74-145
Eric W. Blaylock	74-71-145
Roger Miller	74-71-145
(a) Danny Ives	69-76-145
(a) Scott Register	69-76-145
Chris Murman	74-71-145