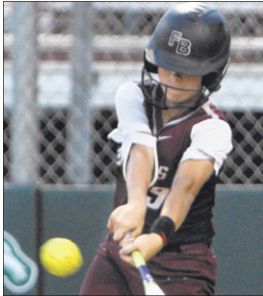


■ **High school softball:** Calallen and Flour Bluff faced off in the first game of their 5A regional quarterfinal series. For a report go to caller.com.



HOOKS TODAY
Opponent: Frisco RoughRiders
When: 7:05 p.m.
Where: Whataburger Field
Pitching probables: David Paulino (CC, RH, 0-1, 2.08 ERA) vs. Victor Payano (Frisco, LH, 4-0, 3.24)
Radio: KKTX-AM 1360, KUNO-AM 1400 (Spanish)
Tickets: \$8-\$17
Info: 561-4665, www.cchooks.com
Note: For a report on Friday's game go to caller.com.



BASEBALL

No worries in the bullpen for Hooks

■ Unit has two wins, six saves in last 10 games

By George Vondracek
george.vondracek@caller.com
361-886-3731

One might glance at the numbers produced by the Hooks' bullpen Thursday night, digits that stained its collective earned-run average by nearly two points during the last six

games, and think there may be cause for concern. Not so, said Corpus Christi pitching coach Dave Borkowski.

"I've been thrilled with what they do. They're competing like crazy, they're picking us up in tough situations," Borkowski said. "They're taking the ball without hesitation, they're pounding the zone, they're using their pitches."

"They've been certainly a plus to what we've been doing and we're winning

a lot of ballgames because they're coming down and sealing the deal for us in the back end."

In the last 10 games before Friday's doubleheader against Frisco — Corpus Christi has won seven of those games — the Hooks' bullpen has a 3.29 ERA with two of the team's victories and six saves. It had a 0.95 ERA in the five games before Thursday. So the five earned runs



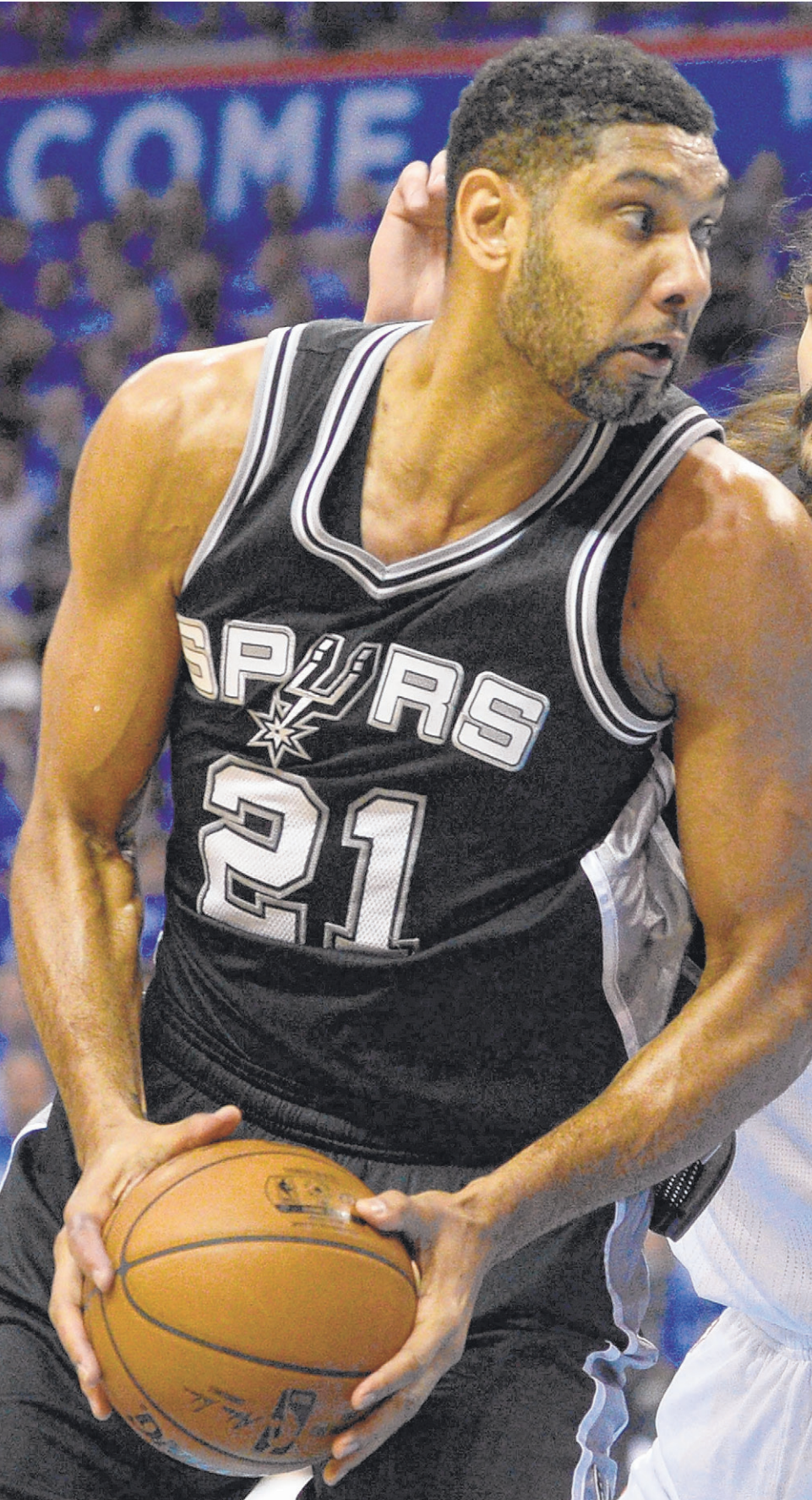
COURTNEY SACCO/CALLER-TIMES

The Hooks' Aaron West has joined Brendan McCurry to collect seven saves this season.

See HOOKS, 5C

NBA

END OF AN ERA?



■ Loss to Thunder does little to tarnish Duncan's legacy with Spurs

By Mark Travis
Special to the Caller-Times

The setting, the circumstances, the pupils were different, but the symbolism was the same.

In 2007, Tim Duncan and LeBron James crossed paths in the corridor of Quicken Loans Arena, with Duncan donning a championship shirt that was a half-hour old.

"This is going to be your league in a little while," Duncan famously told James, "but thanks for giving us this year."

On Thursday night, Duncan's hand patted the chest of another burgeoning legend, this time at center court at Chesapeake Energy Arena in Oklahoma City. Duncan had parting words for anyone who lined up to pay respects after the Thunder upset the Spurs before arriving at Kevin Durant.

Duncan's message to Durant was probably similar to what he told James: The NBA, and maybe even his place on the Spurs, was Durant's for the taking.

Moments later, Duncan raised his hand and pointed a finger to the sky, acknowledging a raucous Thunder crowd that reverently returned the favor, before slipping off into the tunnel for possibly the last time.

See SPURS, 3C



DUNCAN

BY THE NUMBERS

	Totals	Career rank
Games	1,392	eighth
Points	26,496	17th
Rebounds	15,091	seventh
Blocks	3,020	sixth
Titles	5	

Note: Only No. 1 pick to win championship with team that drafted him since 1987. (David Robinson, Spurs)



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stadium arms race hits the prep level

In this wackiest of election seasons, here's a result that should really leave us all agast.

A city in Texas has approved the building of a nearly \$63 million stadium — for high school football, no less.

Yep, the stadium arms race, which has been used so masterfully by professional sports to siphon off billions of dollars from the public coffers, is creeping its way down to the prep level.

"It's all about ego. It's all about who's got the most toys. It's all about power," said Curtis Rath, one of those who led the unsuccessful fight against the stadium measure in McKinney, a suburb about 30 miles northeast of Dallas.

Sound familiar?

It should. High schools — at least those in Texas — have turned to the same playbook that works so well at the higher levels, even though it's not like they're trying to prevent their team from moving to another city (the most familiar tactic used by the pros) or they need the latest state-of-the-art facilities to keep up in recruiting (the general refrain in the college ranks).

While the argument can be made that cutting-edge educational facilities lead parents to pick one district over another when deciding where to live, there's no justification for spending this sort of money on a 12,000-seat football stadium, essentially for the benefit of a very small minority who participate in one extracurricular activity.

"They use the excuse that they're doing it for the kids,"

See NEWBERRY, 6C

West Oso's Chardae Tryon, in her second appearance at the UIL State Track and Field Championships in Austin, hit 43-4.25 to earn a silver medal in the Class 4A girls shot put Friday.



CALEB THOMAS/SPECIAL TO THE CALLER-TIMES

HIGH SCHOOL TRACK

Heartbreak, silver for West Oso's Tryon

■ Foot fault costs her gold in 4A shot put

By Caleb Thomas
Special to the Caller-Times

AUSTIN — West Oso's Chardae Tryon caught a tantalizing glimpse of the gold medal Friday at the UIL State Track and Field Championships.

After struggling for most of the Class 4A shot put competition, Tryon unleashed a throw on her

final attempt that would have vaulted her into first place. Instead, the effort went for naught as she was called for a foot fault after a misstep in the ring.

Tryon, who came into the event with the best regional mark, had to settle for the silver medal with a best of 43 feet, 4¼ inches. Gonzales' Ericka Hernandez, whom Tryon defeated at the Region IV-4A meet, won the event with a mark 46-3.5.

"It was my last high school track meet, and I feel like I put it all on

the line," Tryon said as tears streamed down her cheeks. "I've been competing against (Hernandez) for years. We've gone back and forth. She's a great competitor."

Sinton's Colton Cohea, Calallen's Brooke Barrington, George West's Andrea Waggoner and Falfurrias' Tommy Arrevalo were the only other Coastal Bend athletes to get medals Friday. Cohea surprised himself by tying for third in the Class 4A pole vault, Barrington captured the bronze in the

5A girls 800-meter run and Arrevalo took third in the Class 3A boys shot put.

Waggoner was the lone gold medalist, winning the 3A 300 hurdles in 44.64 seconds.

Tryon, who won the bronze medal last year, had difficulty in the ring throughout the competition. She fouled on her first attempt before recording her runner-up toss on her third try. Hernandez's winning mark also came on her final attempt in the

See TRACK, 5C

SPORTS

A wave of bad news batters Olympics

■ Scandals, Zika virus pose problems

By Stephen Wilson
Associated Press

LONDON—Doping scandals. Bribery allegations. Fears about Zika. Political, economic and corruption crises. What else could go wrong?

The past few days have unleashed a wave of grim news for the Olympics, battering four host cities — past, present and future — on three continents, and further eroding public trust in the credibility of the global sports movement.

The 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, the upcoming Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo — all have been caught up in an unprecedented meltdown of trouble.

Just when the sports world thought it had pulled away from the darkest days of the FIFA and IAAF scandals, a confluence of turmoil this week brought the clouds back and threatened the image and prestige of the Olympics, less



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

A doping control sign is seen at the Laura biathlon and cross-country ski center at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia. Russia operated a state-sponsored doping scheme in 2014, according to the former chief of Moscow's anti-doping lab.

than three months before the Aug. 5 opening ceremony in Brazil.

It poses a new test for the International Olympic Committee, which endured its worst crisis with the Salt Lake City bidding scandal in the late 1990s.

Richard Ings, former chief executive of Australia's anti-doping agency, said sports leaders must work quickly or "sink further into this quicksand."

A look at the chaos across the Olympic world:

SOCHI SCANDAL

The 2014 Games were attacked by critics for a reported \$51 billion price tag. Now they may be remembered for one of the biggest sporting frauds ever exposed. The former head of Moscow's anti-doping lab, Grigory Rodchenkov, detailed in The New York Times how Russia operated a state-sponsored scheme that included exchanging bottles of tainted urine samples for clean ones through a concealed hole in the wall of the Sochi lab.

The doping program reportedly involved at least 15 Russian medal winners. Russian officials

denied the allegations Friday, with President Vladimir Putin's spokesman denouncing Rodchenkov's claims as "a turncoat's libel." The World Anti-Doping Agency will investigate.

The IOC said it "will not hesitate to act decisively to punish those responsible." If the cheating is proven, and it's unclear how much hard evidence exists, it could result in mass disqualifications and stripping of medals. The Sochi Olympics, one of Putin's pet projects, could wind up as Russia's Shame Games.

The new doping allegations won't help Russia's case for having its track and field athletes reinstated for the Rio Games. They were suspended by the IAAF following a WADA panel report that found state-sponsored cheating.

BLAME IT ON RIO

Never has a host nation been in such political and economic turmoil before an Olympics. Seven years ago, when the IOC picked Rio de Janeiro to host South America's first Olympics, Brazil was a rising star on the world stage with a booming, emerging economy. Now, 84 days before the games begin, the country is in its worst recession since the 1930s. It is torn by a massive corruption scandal centered on oil giant Petrobras. Olympic budgets have been slashed.

The political situation has imploded — with the Senate voting Thursday to impeach President

Dilma Rousseff. She's now suspended and won't be declaring the Olympics open on Aug. 5. Her vice president, Michel Temer, is now the interim president.

While most of the Olympic venues are ready, concerns remain over the severe water pollution at the sailing and rowing sites.

If all that wasn't bad enough, Brazil is in the grip of the Zika virus. The mosquito-borne disease has been proven to cause a range of severe birth defects, including brain-damaged babies born with abnormally small heads and a rare neurological disorder that can cause temporary paralysis. A Canadian professor said this week the Olympics should be postponed or moved because of the Zika threat. The IOC and World Health Organization said the games will be safe, while urging visitors to take precautions.

Most Olympics are preceded by controversies and last-minute worries, only for the mood to lift once the caldron has been lit and the host country has won its first medal.

PYEONGCHANG'S PROBLEMS

The first Winter Olympics in South Korea have been dogged by more problems than expected, including construction delays, conflicts over venues, a shortage of local sponsors — and a revolving-door leadership. While preparations for the 2018 games seemed to accelerate

after successful test events this winter, the local organizing committee was hit by yet another sudden resignation of its top leader. For the second time in less than two years, there has been a change at the helm.

Business tycoon Cho Yang-ho stepped down to focus on dealing with the financial troubles at the shipping company his family controls. Cho had taken over in July 2014 after the sudden resignation of Kim Jin-sun, the former governor of the Pyeongchang region.

TROUBLE IN TOKYO

Tokyo, seen as a safe choice when awarded the games three years ago, has been buffeted by a series of problems. The original stadium design was scrapped because it was too expensive. The original logo was dumped after allegations it was copied from a Belgian theater.

But this week brought the most damaging setback yet: allegations of possible bribery during Tokyo's winning bid.

French prosecutors, who have been investigating IAAF corruption, said Thursday they had widened their inquiry to look into payments of 2.8 million Singapore dollars (\$2 million) from a bank in Japan to an account in Singapore in the months before and after Tokyo won the games.

The account in Singapore was tied to the son of disgraced former IAAF President Lamine Diack. Both Diacks are under investigation in France on corruption charges.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Thunder back in familiar spot

■ Durant leads OKC into Western finals

By Cliff Brunt
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY— Now that Kevin Durant is back, the Thunder have returned to a familiar place.

Oklahoma City beat San Antonio in six games to advance to the Western Conference finals for the fourth time in six years — and the fourth time in the past five seasons that Durant has been healthy.

San Antonio was expected to advance, especially after going 40-1 at home during the regular season to claim the No. 2 seed in the West. But the third-seeded Thunder won twice in San Antonio during the series, boosting their confidence heading into Game 1 against the defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors on Monday night in Oakland.

Durant is still chasing his first NBA title, so he was able to put the Spurs series in its proper perspective.

"This wasn't our championship," Durant said after Thursday night's clincher. "We were confident coming in here. We're just happy that we're moving forward and have an opportunity to play again,



EPA/LARRY W. SMITH CORBIS

The Thunder's Kevin Durant (center) averaged 28.5 points in the playoff series against San Antonio.

and we're excited about it."

Durant is especially excited, considering where he was a year ago at this time. He followed his 2013-14 MVP season by missing most of last season with a broken bone in his right foot. The Thunder missed the playoffs, and Durant watched as Golden State's Stephen Curry won the MVP award and an NBA title.

This season, Curry won the scoring title and

another MVP award, while Durant bounced back to finish fifth in the MVP balloting.

If anyone can handle a shootout with Curry, it's Durant. The four-time scoring champion struggled with his shot in a first-round series against Dallas but looked like himself against San Antonio. He averaged 28.5 points on 50 percent shooting in the series against the Spurs, scoring 41 points in Games 4 and 37 in Game 6.

The Warriors won a record 73 games in the regular season, but Durant made it clear the Thunder like where they stand after beating the Spurs, who posted one of the best regular seasons in NBA history. The Thunder lost Game 1 at San Antonio 124-92 but rallied to win four of the next five games.

"We weren't in this position for nothing," Durant said. "I think throughout the season, we stood by who we were as a team. We were mixing different lineups, so that helped out as well. Guys got experience out there during the regular season."

The grind of the San Antonio series could serve the Thunder well against Golden State. Though the Thunder won the series 4-2, four of the games were battles.

"Obviously, in a perfect world we would love to be up 25 or 30 points every game, but teams are too good, especially at this time of year," Durant said. "I think if you have to grind things out, it builds character. In a perfect world we would love to be up by that many points, but when we are in a grind-out game, it gets us more prepared for that type of play, especially since those type of games are more frequent than blowout games postseason."

SPURS from 1C

Another torch had been passed. Or so it seemed.

Had Duncan called it quits after he collected his fourth ring against the Cavaliers at 30, he would have retired the greatest power forward to ever play. Instead, he has added nine 50-win seasons, three 60-win seasons (including a franchise-best 67 wins this season), four conference finals appearances, two trips to the Finals and another ring during the back half of his career.

Duncan's postscript to his prime lasting nine seasons and including unprecedented team success is just as impressive as the days when he was a walking double-double and obvious MVP candidate. Duncan had defied decline for so long that it seemed assured that he would retire without ever looking vulnerable. Against Oklahoma City, with the young and athletic trio of Serge Ibaka, Steven Adams and Enes Kanter protecting the paint and battering him on the boards, Duncan finally looked his age.

Never had the inevitable seemed so surprising.

Duncan's deterioration against Oklahoma City wasn't a unique problem. As Duncan missed shots in the

paint he used to make in his sleep, Manu Ginobili struggled to create separation and to stay in front of the Thunder's swarming perimeter players, David West and Boris Diaw were abused on the glass and even LaMarcus Aldridge was physically worn down by the end of the series.

The only Spurs who looked as if they belonged athletically in this series were Danny Green and Kawhi Leonard. As was the case in 2012, the Thunder exposed San Antonio with an attribute nobody can control: Youth.

With athletic superstars such as Westbrook and Durant entering their primes and a fast-paced, small-ball dynasty brewing in the Bay Area, Duncan and Ginobili will have to decide whether prolonging their Hall-of-Fame careers is a shrewd decision. Duncan and Ginobili can still be effective contributors in a pinch, but the league is quickly trending in a different direction.

For Duncan, retiring at 40 is a natural stopping point, but coming back for his 20th season with one team like his old rival Kobe Bryant just did would be fitting, too.

If this is the end for Duncan, he leaves having done everything in his power to maintain the Spurs' dominance during his 19 seasons. He did every job asked of him, from superstar anchor on both ends of the

floor in his prime to the guiding light for San Antonio's next generation during his epilogue, and his myriad accomplishments and accolades will land him on almost every list of the 10 best players ever.

The nine-season gap between Duncan prophesying James' dominance and his congratulatory embrace with Durant might be Duncan's greatest achievement. Duncan, who won a title in three different decades, defined a dynasty that survived a generation past its expiration date, prolonging the waits of Durant, Westbrook and many others to supplant the Spurs as the next powerhouse in the West.

And if Duncan walks away, he does so having left the Spurs with one final triumph: A sturdily built bridge to Spurs' next era.

Duncan lasted long enough to watch Leonard grow into a perennial MVP candidate, and his allure was great enough to attract Aldridge in free agency, giving San Antonio a strong foundation to build on when he is no longer around. Although Duncan might have told James and Durant the league would soon be theirs, he has helped groom his own heir apparent in San Antonio, ensuring the torch at the AT&T Center will stay lit.

Because the Spurs, like Duncan, will never go away.

GOLF



EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO ASSOCIATION/ TANNEN MAURY

Jason Day was at 14 under par, matching Greg Norman's 36-hole record, before a two-hour storm delay halted play in the second round Friday at The Players Championship.

Day in command at The Players

■ He goes up by 3 before storm hits

By The Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Jason Day finished with two big birdies as the sky darkened Friday to reach 14 under par and stay in firm control of The Players Championship.

Day rolled in a 40-foot putt down the slope on the par-3 13th hole, and then hit a 5-iron into within 2 feet on the next hole to stretch his lead to three shots over Shane Lowry on another day of low scoring at the TPC Sawgrass.

Greg Norman set the 36-hole record at The Players at 14-under 130 in 1994, the year the Shark made only one bogey the entire week. Day looks just as good and has yet to drop a shot over the 32 holes he has played. A two-hour storm delay meant the second round could not be finished.

"I'm at 14 under par, I've got a good lead going on, I just can't sit back," Day said. "I need to keep pushing forward. And the moment that I lose a little bit of focus and make a few mental errors and mistakes, that's when I let the field back in. And I just can't afford to do that."

Lowry had a 68 and was at 11-under 133, a solid round that only got going when he hit a wedge so badly that it didn't even reach the island green at the par-3 17th. He managed to escape with bogey, and then holed a wedge from about 180 yards on the 18th hole for eagle.

Two tough pars at the end of his round meant he was likely to be in the final group with Day.

Jordan Spieth was just hopeful of a Saturday tee time, as was Phil Mickelson.

Spieth, looking frustrated as ever, got to the projected cut of 2 under with back-to-back birdies

to start the back nine, only to catch a bad break when a rake kept his ball from rolling into the bunker, instead staying on the steep slope leading to the sand. The best he could do was chip over the green and he made bogey, and his tee shot was wild to the right on the 15th when they stopped because of darkness. Spieth was at 1 under.

Mickelson had to make an 8-foot par putt on the par-5 16th to stay at 1 under. He was to return at 9:15 a.m. to play the 17th and 18th, likely needing a birdie on one of them to make the cut.

Defending champion Rickie Fowler shot 71 and was at 1-under 143. He needed help to make the cut.

Alex Cejka and Jonas Blixt each shot 67 and were at 10-under 134, along with Cameron Tringale (69).

Another day of calm and soft greens in the morning led to more record-tying performances, and a few irritated golfers who could have gone even lower.

Colt Knost made a 15-foot birdie putt on the 17th to reach 10 under, only to three-putt the 18th and have to settle for a course record-tying 63.

MAURITIUS OPEN

Dodt opens 3-shot lead through two

BEAUCHAMPS, Mauritius— Andrew Dodt opened a three-shot lead at the Mauritius Open after putting together a solid 2-under 70 in the second round on Friday.

The Australian extended his overnight advantage at Four Seasons Golf Club with five birdies to go 8 under overall. He had an adventurous back nine, with four of those birdies, a bogey, and a double-bogey seven on his way back in.

But in blustery sea winds on the Indian Ocean island's east coast, that round proved to be one of the best.