



2009 HP BYRON NELSON CHAMPIONSHIP

TPC Four Seasons Resort May 18-24, 2009
Irving, TX

FedExCup Pts: 500 Purse: \$6,500,000
Par/Yards: 35-35--70/7,166

First-Round Notes – Thursday, May 21, 2009

Weather: Sunny. High of 85. Winds ESE 5-10 mph.

James Nitties, who birdied the final four holes on Thursday at the TPC Four Seasons Resort, and Ken Duke posted matching 5-under 65s to take the first-round lead at the HP Byron Nelson Championship, one stroke clear of Brad Adamonis, Scott McCarron, Charles Howell III and Mike Weir.

The sub-70 score snaps a string of 11 straight rounds in the 70s for Duke. The 40-year-old native of Hope, Arkansas is making his 14th start of the season, with six made cuts and a season-best T26 at the Verizon Heritage. He is currently 122nd on the FedExCup points list.

Nitties is making his 15th start of the season, with seven made cuts and five top-25 finishes. He has top-10 finishes at the FBR Open (T4) and the Mayakoba Golf Classic (T6), and is most recently coming off of four consecutive rounds in the 60s and a T17 finish at last week's Valero Texas Open.

This marks the second time that Ken Duke and James Nitties have held at least a share of the first-round lead. Duke was tied for the lead after the first day of the 2008 John Deere Classic before finishing T18. Nitties was tied for the lead earlier this year at the FBR Open before finishing T4.

Duke is making his fourth start at the HP Byron Nelson Championship, with a T35 finish in 2008, T7 in 2007 and 77th-place effort in 2004. Thursday's round was just one shy of his best score at the TPC Four Seasons Resort, a 6-under 64 during the third round in 2007.

The first-round leader/co-leader has gone on to win just five of 20 stroke-play events on the PGA TOUR this season, most recently Phil Mickelson at the WGC-CA Championship. Last year, just nine of 46 first-round leaders/co-leaders went on to win.

First-round leaders have not fared well at the HP Byron Nelson Championship over the previous 55 playings of the tournament. Only seven players have carried the opening-day lead on to victory, including Scott Simpson (1993), Tom Watson (1979-80), Mark Hayes (1976), Chi Chi Rodriguez (1972), Earl Stewart (1961) and Don January (1956). Only two have won the tournament in wire-to-wire fashion – Hayes in 1976 and Watson in 1980. (Note: Complete first-round scores are not available for the inaugural event in 1944, which was won by Byron Nelson).

All four players at 4-under 66 played in the morning wave, including Weir, McCarron, Howell III and Adamonis. Listed below is their history at the HP Byron Nelson Championship prior to 2009:

McCarron (13 career starts, eight made cuts, career-best T6 in 1998, last finished T13 in 2008)

Weir (seven career starts, three made cuts, career-best T11 in 2001, last finished T19 in 2007)

Howell III (six career starts, two made cuts, career-best T34 in 2006, last missed the cut in 2007)

Adamonis (one career start, missed cut in 2008)

Defending champion Adam Scott opened with a 1-over 71 in his attempt to become the first repeat winner of the HP Byron Nelson Championship since Tom Watson won three in a row from 1978-80. Scott is making his third start at the HP Byron Nelson Championship (T3-2006, 1-2008).

Seven past champions of the HP Byron Nelson Championship are competing this week, including 2008 winner Adam Scott (71), 2007 champion Scott Verplank (69), 2005 champion Ted Purdy (74), 2003 winner Vijay Singh (70), 2002 champion Shigeaki Maruyama (72), 2000 victor Jesper Parnevik (67) and 1987 champion Fred Couples (69).

1987 HP Byron Nelson Championship winner and 2009 President's Cup U.S. team captain Fred Couples opened with a 1-under 69. Couples will turn 50 and become eligible for the Champions Tour in early October, but continues to show he still belongs on the PGA TOUR. Currently No. 76 on the FedExCup points list, Couples posted season-best T3 efforts at the Northern Trust Open and the Shell Houston Open.

2007 HP Byron Nelson Championship winner Scott Verplank (69) is making his 23rd start at the tournament. Just five players have made more starts (28 - Lanny Wadkins, Tom Watson; 27 - Ben Crenshaw; 24- Bruce Lietzke, Raymond Floyd).

Corey Pavin, who is attempting to become the first player to win all four Texas Swing tournaments during his career on the PGA TOUR, struggled to a 7-over 77. Pavin's victories in the Lone Star State include the 1984 Shell Houston Open, 1985 and 1996 Colonial National Invitation and the 1988 Valero Texas Open.

Dallas, TX native and resident Matt Weibring opened with a 3-under 67. His only previous start at the tournament was a missed cut in 2005 (73-71). Weibring's Dad, D.A., spearheaded the \$10 million redesign of the TPC Four Seasons prior to the 2008 tournament. The elder Weibring played in the tournament 22 times, with runner-up finishes in 1993 and 1995.

Bogey-free rounds were posted by Chris DiMarco (67), Robert Allenby (67) and Scott Gutschewski (68).

Scoring Averages at the par-70 TPC Four Seasons Resort:

	Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
Thursday	35.381	35.858	70.858	---

The par-4 15th hole played the toughest on Thursday, yielding a 4.310 average and just 11 birdies. The par-5 seventh hole was the easiest with a 4.484 average, giving up five eagles.

Seventy-three players out of the 155-player field posted par-or-better scores during the first round, with 53 of those posting sub-70 scores.

John Huston withdrew during the first round with a back injury.