



Mercedes-Benz  
CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2009 MERCEDES-BENZ CHAMPIONSHIP

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**Dates:** December 5-11, 2009

**Where:** The Plantation Course at Kapalua; Kapalua, HI      Par/Yards: 36-37—73/7,411

**Field:** 33 (winners only from the 2008 season, with a collective total of 163 career PGA TOUR wins)

**Purse:** \$5,600,000; **Winner's Share:** \$1,120,000

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play (no cut)

### KEY STORYLINES:

1. **PGA TOUR kicks off 2009 Season** – The FedExCup enters its third year in 2009 and will begin once again in Kapalua. Three players who finished among the top 10 at the 2008 Mercedes-Benz Championship also finished in the top 10 on the final FedExCup standings (Mike Weir, Jim Furyk, Justin Leonard). The FedExCup has a few modifications heading into the 2009 season:
  - Shifting the points reset from the beginning of the Playoffs to after the BMW Championship, which means points earned during the PGA TOUR Regular Season will be carried through the first three Playoff events
  - Quintupling points awarded at Playoff tournaments relative to Regular Season tournaments
  - Changing the field size of the Playoff events to 125 at The Barclays, 100 at the Deutsche Bank Championship, 70 at the BMW Championship and 30 at THE TOUR Championship; they previously were 144, 120, 70 and 30
  - Streamlining the points structure for ease of understanding.
2. **Emerging stars set to kick off 2009 season** – A pair of young guns, two-time PGA TOUR winners Anthony Kim and Camilo Villegas, are set to kick off their season for the first time in Kapalua. The two will be paired together during the first round, a precursor to the 2008 BCS National Championship Game, which will kick off later that night featuring their alma maters – the University of Florida (Villegas) and the University of Oklahoma (Kim). A third emerging star, Boo Weekley, makes his second appearance in Maui.
  - Kim is coming off a fourth-place finish in the FedExCup standings, highlighted by victories at the Wachovia Championship and the AT&T National, and \$4,656,265 in earnings.
  - Villegas capped off a highly-successful season ranked second in the FedExCup standings, including victories in the last two PGA TOUR Playoff events (BMW Championship and THE TOUR Championship presented by Coca-Cola).
  - Weekley has emerged as a folk hero on the PGA TOUR over the last several years. He punctuated the United States Ryder Cup team's victory last fall by riding his driver, "Happy Gilmore style" down the fairway. Following the Ryder Cup, Weekley made an appearance on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, and has a book in the works.
3. **2008 FedExCup champion hopes to shine again in Hawaii** – Vijay Singh capped off a banner year on the PGA TOUR by hoisting the FedExCup. He'll begin his quest for another FedExCup title at the 2009 Mercedes-Benz Championship – where he has been nothing less than dominate over his career. Out of his last nine starts at the event, he has amassed seven top-5 finishes – including a victory in 2007 and runner-up showings in 2004 and 2006.
4. **Veterans make return trip to Kapalua** – Several notable veterans stepped back into the winner's circle in 2008 to guarantee a return trip to the season-opening event in Kapalua:

- Davis Love III – a 20-time TOUR winner (with his last coming at the 2008 Children's Miracle Network Classic) making his first visit to Kapalua since a T4 finish in 2007. In all, Love has eight top-10 finishes in 12 appearances at the Mercedes-Benz Championship, including a victory in 1993.
- Ernie Els – Winner of the 2008 Honda Classic returns to the Plantation Course for the first time since a T3 finish in 2005. Has seven career starts in Kapalua, with four top-3 finishes in his last five starts (2000-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001-T3, 2003-1, 2004-T21, 2005-T3).
- Stewart Cink – Victory at the 2008 Travelers Championship punched his ticket to the Mercedes-Benz Championship for the first time since 2005 (T5).

#### **ADDITIONAL STORYLINES:**

1. **Winning at Kapalua** – Winning the Mercedes-Benz Championship has traditionally sparked an outstanding season – out of the last 17 winners at the Mercedes-Benz Championship, 2008 champion Daniel Chopra is the only one who failed to advance to THE TOUR Championship presented by Coca-Cola, the fourth and final event in the PGA TOUR Playoffs for the FedExCup.
2. **Daniel Chopra set to defend** – Daniel Chopra returns in 2009 to defend his title at the Mercedes-Benz Championship. His win in 2008 – his only top-10 finish of the year – came just two starts after his inaugural victory at the 2007 Ginn sur Mer Classic.
3. **Will international players continue to dominate?** – Foreign-born players have captured the title at the Mercedes-Benz Championship for seven consecutive years (2008, Daniel Chopra; 2007, Vijay Singh; 2004-2006, Stuart Appleby; 2003, Ernie Els; 2002, Sergio Garcia).
4. **First-time winners abundant in 2008** – There were 12 first-time winners on the PGA TOUR in 2008, and all 12 are expected to make their first trip to Maui for the Mercedes-Benz Championship. The first-time winners are: Brian Gay, Greg Kraft, Andres Romero, Johnson Wagner, Anthony Kim, Ryuji Imada, Richard S. Johnson, Chez Reavie, Parker McLachlin, Camilo Villegas, Dustin Johnson and Marc Turnesa. Of that group, Romero, Reavie, D. Johnson and Turnesa were playing in their rookie season in 2008.
  - Romero, 27, won the Zurich Classic of New Orleans and finished 28<sup>th</sup> in the final FedExCup standings on his way to Rookie of the Year honors in 2008. The Argentina native also made the cut in all four major championships, one of just 11 players to do so in 2008, and posted top 10s at the Masters Tournament (T8) and PGA Championship (T7).
5. **Opening Drive** – On Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m., GOLF CHANNEL and NBC golf announcer Mark Roling will preside over the “Opening Drive” ceremonies which will include:
  - Hawaiian Blessing
  - Coast Guard Color Guard presentation of the colors of the United States
  - National Anthem sung by recording artist Josh Kelly, with Army helicopter flyover
  - Greg Kinnear serving as the honorary starter, introducing NFL Hall of Famer John Elway, who will hit the Ceremonial 2009 Opening Drive for the FedExCup
  - Marc Turnesa hits the first official tee shot of the 2008 PGA TOUR campaign
6. **Hollywood makes its presence felt on Maui** – A plethora of athletes, recording artists, Hollywood actors, etc. will be playing in the Mercedes-Benz Championship pro-am on Wednesday of tournament week. Among those invited to tee it up with the PGA TOUR's best are: John Elway, Greg Kinnear, Josh Kelly, Kevin Dillon, Anthony Anderson, Patrick Warburton, Oliver Hudson, Kyle MacLachlin, John Hamm, Michael Bolton and Luke Wilson.
7. **Inaugural Kodak Challenge begins in Kapalua** – A first-of-its-kind competition for PGA TOUR players that offers \$1 million to the winner gets underway this week at the Mercedes-Benz Championship. The Kodak Challenge celebrates beautiful holes and memorable moments on the PGA TOUR. There will be one designated Kodak Challenge Hole at 24 different PGA TOUR tournaments – with this week's featured hole the 663-yard 18<sup>th</sup> hole. Players, who must play at least 18 of the holes to be eligible, will count their lowest score relative to par on the Kodak Challenge Hole made during an official competition round. The player with the lowest cumulative score at the end of the challenge wins. For up-to-date standings, please visit [pgatour.com/kodakchallenge](http://pgatour.com/kodakchallenge).