



Mercedes-Benz
CHAMPIONSHIP

2009 Mercedes-Benz Championship

(The 1st of 37 events in the PGA TOUR Regular Season)

**Kapalua, Maui, HI
The Plantation Course**

Jan. 8-11, 2009

Purse: \$5,600,000 (\$1,120,000 to the winner)

Par/Yards: 36-37—73/7,411

First-Round Notes – Thursday, January 8, 2009

Weather: Partly cloudy and breezy, with temperatures reaching 79. Winds ENE 10-20 mph.

Geoff Ogilvy moved out to the opening-round lead at the winners-only Mercedes-Benz Championship with a 6-under 67, taking a one-shot advantage over Ernie Els, Kenny Perry and Johnson Wagner. Ogilvy, a four-time PGA TOUR winner and 2008 World Golf Championships-CA Championship victor, is making his third consecutive appearance at Kapalua (T13 – 2006, T19 – 2007). Thursday marked his first sub-70 round at Kapalua out of nine overall rounds.

This represents the fifth first-round lead for Geoff Ogilvy on TOUR, having most recently carried the 18-hole lead to victory at the 2008 WGC-CA Championship. The other leads came at the 2006 Honda Classic (2nd), 2001 Honda Classic (T2) and the 2001 Chrysler Classic of Tucson (T3).

Geoff Ogilvy, a 31-year-old native of Adelaide, Australia, is hoping to extend a streak in which a foreign-born player has 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).

Ryuji Imada (69) had seven straight birdies on Nos. 6-12, just one shy of the TOUR record of eight – posted six times and most recently by Jerry Kelly during the third round of the 2003 Las Vegas Invitational.

Ernie Els, winner of the 2003 Mercedes-Benz Championship, posted a 5-under 68 in his first return trip to the Plantation Course since 2005. Els has seven previous starts in Kapalua, with four top-3 finishes in his last five starts (2000-2nd, 2001-T3, 2003-1, 2004-T21, 2005-T3).

In a match-up reminiscent to Thursday's NCAA National Championship football game, Anthony Kim (University of Oklahoma) and Camilo Villegas (University of Florida) were paired together in the opening-round of the Mercedes-Benz Championship. Kim, with a 2-under 71, got the best of his playing partner, who opened the season with a 1-over 74.

Johnson Wagner, winner of the 2008 Shell Houston Open, went birdie-birdie-eagle on the closing holes to record a 5-under 68. Wagner is one of 12 players making first appearances at the Mercedes-Benz Championship. Dating back to 1989, just three players have won the tournament in their first attempt (Daniel Chopra – 2008, Sergio Garcia – 2002 and Steve Jones – 1989).

Johnson Wagner and Trevor Immelman (72) eagled the par-5 18th hole on Thursday to take the early lead in the 2009 Kodak Challenge, a first-of-its-kind competition with a \$1 million payout at the end of the season. There will be one designated Kodak Challenge hole (the 18th hole this week at Kapalua) at 24 different PGA TOUR tournaments, with players required to play at least 18 of the holes to be eligible. Players will count their lowest score relative to par on the hole made during an official competition round.

Davis Love III – a 20-time PGA TOUR winner (with his last coming at the 2008 Children's Miracle Network Classic) – posted a 4-under 69 on Thursday. In all, Love has eight top-10 finishes in 12 previous starts at the Mercedes-Benz Championship, including a win in 1993 and most recently a T4 in 2007.

Vijay Singh, the winner of the 2008 FedExCup, began the season with an even-par 73. He has been nothing short of dominant at the Mercedes-Benz Championship, with seven top-5 finishes in his last nine starts – including a victory in 2007 and runner-up showings in 2004 and 2006.

Defending champion Daniel Chopra opened his 2009 FedExCup season with a round of 79. In the history of the Mercedes-Benz Championship, six players have won the tournament in back-to-back years: Stuart Appleby (2004-05-06), Lanny Wadkins (1982-83), Tom Watson (1979-80), Arnold Palmer (1965-66), Jack Nicklaus (1963-64) and Gene Littler (1955-56-57).

Chopra is one of four previous winners of the Mercedes-Benz Championships in the field this week. The others include 2003 winner Ernie Els (68), 1993 champion Davis Love III (69) and 2007 champion Vijay Singh (73).

There were just two bogey-free rounds on Thursday: Geoff Ogilvy (67) and D.J. Trahan (70).

The par-73 Plantation Course yielded a 72.364 average on Thursday, with the par-4 first hole playing the most difficult at 4.303. The par-5 18th hole played the easiest at 4.636.