



## 2009 TRANSITIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

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**Dates:** March 16-22, 2009  
**Where:** Innisbrook Resort & GC, Copperhead Course, Palm Harbor, FL  
**Par/Yards:** (71/7,340)  
**Field:** 144  
**Purse:** \$5,400,000  
**Winner's Share:** \$972,000  
**FedExCup points to winner:** 500  
**Format:** 72-hole stroke play

### KEY STORYLINES:

**Copperhead charities** – This will be the inaugural year of title sponsorship for Transitions Optical, a locally-based company with a global reach as a leading manufacturer of photo-chromatic lenses. However, it is far from the first event for the Copperheads, a Tampa Bay area community and business leaders who provide the golf fans of the area with a first-class professional golf tournament combined with raising funds for area charities. In the last five years the Copperheads have raised more than \$8 million for area charities and have pushed the total amount raised since 1977 to approximately \$22 million. More than 100 Tampa Bay area charities actively participate in the Transitions Championship through Birdies for Tampa Bay Charities. This is a grass roots fundraising program designed to give all 501(c)(3) charities an opportunity to raise money for their organizations based on the number of birdies made by contestants during the tournament.

**O'Hair in top form** – Defending champion Sean O'Hair is off to a strong start in 2009, with three top-10s in five starts, and sits 12<sup>th</sup> in current FedExCup standings. His last time out, O'Hair won three matches en route to a T5 finish at the World Golf Championships-Accenture Match Play Championship. He knocked out Adam Scott, Boo Weekley and Ian Poulter before falling to Stewart Cink in the quarterfinals.

**FedExCup king Singh** – Vijay Singh, the 2008 FedExCup champion, is a past winner who owns the Transitions Championship 72-hole scoring record. Singh set the record (65-69-67-65—266) of 18-under-par in 2004, the year after finishing second in his first appearance in the tournament. Singh missed the cut in 2005 and finished T19 in both 2006 and 2007. He did not play here in 2008. A slow start to 2009 has Singh at No. 104<sup>th</sup> in FedExCup points, although he missed nearly a month due to knee surgery following the season-opening Mercedes-Benz Championship.

**Ishikawa invitation** – Seventeen-year-old Japanese sensation, Ryo Ishikawa, will play on a sponsor's exemption after already having competed in the Northern Trust Open, his first PGA TOUR start, where he missed the cut by three strokes (73-71). Ishikawa won his Japan Golf Tour debut as an amateur in May 2007, when he won the Munsingwear Open KSB Cup at the age of 15. He turned professional in 2008 and won his second Japan Golf Tour event in November at the Mynavi ABC Championship. Ishikawa, nicknamed the "Shy Prince", has also received an invitation to The Masters at Augusta National in April. The youngest player to win a PGA TOUR event is Johnny McDermott, who won the 1911 U.S. Open at 19 years, 10 months.

**Ambassador Perry** – Kenny Perry, along with last year's Masters Champion, Trevor Immelman, recently became "Healthy Sight Ambassadors," joining Transitions Optical to raise awareness for the

importance of healthy sight and establish a clear link between healthy, quality sight and optimal athletic performance. Perry is familiar with the impact that vision has on his game, "as someone who has persevered despite several complications with my vision, quality of sight is everything to me," said the 48-year-old Ryder Cup star. Perry has played in five of the eight Transitions Championships with a best finish of T8 in 2004. Perry wrapped up his 13<sup>th</sup> career PGA TOUR victory earlier this year at the FBR Open in a playoff over Charley Hoffman. After the win, the 48-year-old Perry expounded on his goal of winning 20 PGA TOUR events. "The Ryder Cup last year was an unrealistic goal if you really think about it. I'm 100-something in the world at the time, pretty much -- I had to do something magical, and I did, I won three out of five tournaments in the middle of the summer. All of a sudden I jumped right on the Ryder Cup team. That kind of spurred me on. So I set a goal out there that's probably unrealistic and unreachable, but yet here I am. I'm only seven away now, not eight. So you never know."

#### **ADDITIONAL STORYLINES:**

**Scott returns** – Australian Adam Scott, a six-time PGA TOUR winner, including one in each of the last three years, played the Transitions Championship on two occasions when it was in the fall (2006/MC, 2005/T35) but has not participated the last two years with the tournament date in the spring. The 28-year-old, who also owns eight international victories, started off the season strong with a T2 finish at the Sony Open in Hawaii.

**Up and down Choi** – Seven-time TOUR winner, K.J. Choi, has been hot and cold in Tampa Bay. Choi earned two of his seven victories at the Transitions Championship making him the only multiple winner in the tournament's eight year history. The South Korean, who now resides in The Woodlands, TX, has also missed two cuts (2000, 2004) and withdrew after a first-round 79 in 2005. Choi opened with an 8-under 63 when he won the title in 2002 and followed with a trio of 68s to post a then tournament-record of 17-under 267, bettered by a stroke by Vijay Singh in 2004.

**Course record symmetry** – TOUR veterans, Jeff Sluman and Mark Calcavecchia, have more than a few things in common. Both attended college in Florida (Sluman/Florida State and Calcavecchia/Florida), both own major championships, (Sluman/1988 PGA, Calcavecchia/1989 British Open) and they both own a share of the Innisbrook Resort Copperhead Course record with 9-under 62s. Sluman's 62 came in the first round of the 2004 tournament where he finished T20. In 2006, Calcavecchia fired his 62 in the third round and was tied for the lead with Heath Slocum after 54 holes before posting a final-round 70 en route to his last PGA TOUR victory.

**Internationals to watch** – With The Presidents Cup coming up later this year at Harding Park in San Francisco, the Transitions Championship has three past champions who are eligible for the International Team, K.J. Choi, Retief Goosen and Vijay Singh. Others among the top-10 of the current Presidents Cup standings slated to play the Transitions Championship include: Geoff Ogilvy, Adam Scott, Trevor Immelman and Tim Clark for the Internationals and Kenny Perry, Steve Stricker, Zach Johnson and Sean O'Hair for the American team.

**Campbell's comeback** – Michael Campbell of New Zealand will make his first appearance at the Transitions Championship and his first 2009 PGA TOUR start. The 2005 U.S. Open Champion is coming back from a shoulder injury he suffered last year. Campbell attempted to play three European Tour events early this year but withdrew from the UBS Hong Kong Open and retired from two events in the Middle East due to the injury. In 2008 the Kiwi played six TOUR events – the Shell Houston Open and THE PLAYERS Championship, along with all four majors, making the cut at the British Open and the PGA Championship.

**Past Champions continue to return** – Former champions have a good history of attendance at the Transitions Championship. John Huston (2000) is the only former champion to have played in every Transitions Championship. K.J. Choi has played seven of eight times and is the only multiple winner (2002, 2006). Mark Calcavecchia (2007) and Carl Pettersson (2005) have played six times, while Vijay Singh (2004) and Retief Goosen (2003) have played five. Sean O'Hair, the defending champion, has played four times, every year since he became a PGA TOUR member in 2005. The tournament was not held in 2001 due to the terrorist attacks on September 11.

**Funk fixed** – Fred Funk, an eight-time winner on the PGA TOUR and multiple winner on the Champions Tour last year, will tee it up at the Transitions Championship, his first start on the PGA TOUR since last year's Viking Classic in September. Funk suffered complications from a knee injury

last year, preventing him from defending his title at the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai on the Champions Tour earlier this year. The former PLAYERS Championship winner (2005) has made two starts on the Champions Tour this year, finishing T24 at the ACE Group Classic and T4 at the Toshiba Classic. Funk's best finish at the Transitions Championship is T35 in 2005.

**Rookies Klauk, Piercy and Simpson stellar so far** – Jeff Klauk, Scott Piercy and Webb Simpson, all PGA TOUR rookies in 2009, have made an impression early in the season. Through the Honda Classic, Klauk, who has made seven cuts from seven starts, lies 19<sup>th</sup> in FedExCup points. Piercy, who is 25<sup>th</sup> on the FedExCup list, has finished in the top-20 in five of his six starts, while 23-year-old Wake Forest graduate, Simpson, has two top-10s from five starts and sits 39<sup>th</sup> in FedExCup points.

**Immelman readies for Masters defense** – Trevor Immelman is a month away from defending his Masters title. The South African has finished in the top-10 just twice since winning his first Major Championship last year, losing a playoff to Justin Leonard at the Stanford St. Jude Championship and a T10 at THE TOUR Championship presented by Coca-Cola. Immelman has yet to finish in the top-40 in the Transitions Championship in three starts.

**Copperhead a tough test** – The Copperhead Course at Innisbrook Resort ranked as the eighth most difficult course on TOUR in 2008. It was more difficult (in relation to par) than Augusta National, home of the Masters Tournament.

**Striker striking hot** – Steve Stricker may be one of the hottest players on TOUR with two top-3s in five starts. Stricker's scoring average this year (through Accenture Match Play Championship) is 69.43 (6<sup>th</sup>), including a final-round 77 at the 50<sup>th</sup> Bob Hope Classic, where he finished T3. Stricker finished second at the Northern Trust Open. Luke Donald leads the scoring average with 69.05.

**Boo who?** – Boo Weekley is one of the most unique personalities in golf, perhaps even all of sports. Weekley is on a short list of players with whom fans identify on a first-name basis. "I think the TOUR needs me in the fact of my personality," said Weekley. "I'll say some things that it might be wrong, it ain't going to be politically correct, but I'm going to say them because that's the only way I know how to say them."

**Transitions treats fans** – Fans attending the Transitions Championship will have a selection of activities in which to participate, along with viewing some outstanding golf. They can play Wii games with members of the Vision Council to learn about proper eye care, enjoy cooking demonstrations from chefs Andre Halston and Todd Gray, interact with healthcare experts and introduce kids to clinics on site.