



2009 Zurich Classic of New Orleans
(The 18th of 37 events in the PGA TOUR Regular Season)

Avondale, LA **April 20-26, 2009** **FedExCup Points: 500** **Purse: \$6,300,000**
TPC Louisiana **Par/Yards: 36-36—72/7,399**

First-Round Notes – Thursday, April 23, 2009

Weather: Mostly sunny, warm and humid with temperatures in the mid 80s. South winds at 5-10 mph increasing to 10-20 mph in the afternoon.

Charlie Wi seems to do well in the opening rounds of “Classics.” Wi shot a bogey-free, 6-under 66 to lead after the first round of the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. The South Korean, who resides in California, was in the first group of the day and opened with four birdies in his first five holes. Wi has held the first-round lead/co-lead three previous times in his career.

Year	Tournament	Eventual Finish
2005	84 LUMBER Classic	T32
2007	The Honda Classic	T13
2008	John Deere Classic	T4
2009	Zurich Classic of New Orleans	?

This is the 7th consecutive tournament Charlie Wi has posted par or better scores in the first round.

Tournament	First Round Score	Eventual Finish
AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am	68 (-4)	T14
Northern Trust Open	70 (-1)	T59
The Honda Classic	67 (-3)	T9
Transitions Championship	68 (-3)	T4
Shell Houston Open	72 (even)	MC
Verizon Heritage	71 (even)	T62
Zurich Classic of New Orleans	66 (-6)	?

Charlie Wi finished T4 at the Transitions Championship for his best finish on the PGA TOUR this season. His career-best finish is T2 at both the 2007 U.S. Bank Championship in Milwaukee and the 2008 Valero Texas Open.

Charlie Wi has nine International victories, all coming in Asia, the most-recent in 2006 at the Maybank Malaysian Open, a co-sanctioned European/Asian Tour event.

Charlie Wi is currently 52nd on the FedExCup standings and could move into the top-10 with a victory here this week. Wi is also 39th on the International Team Presidents Cup standings.

Only five of 16 first-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win on the PGA TOUR this season.

John Merrick, who finished T6 at The Masters two weeks ago, is among a group of six??? players at 5-under 67. Also at 5-under are Jay Williamson, Nathan Green, Parker McLachlin, Charles Warren and Eric Axley.

John Merrick has three top-10 finishes in 11 starts this year and is averaging almost 100 FedExCup points per start. Merrick, who has qualified for the playoffs in each of the first two years of the FedExCup competition, is currently ranked 22nd in the FedExCup standings.

Eric Axley (67), who celebrated his 35th birthday during Wednesday's pro-am, posted his fourth round in the 60s this season. The other three rounds in the 60s came the week of the 50th Bob Hope Classic (69-68-70-69) where he missed the 72-hole cut. Axley's season-best finish is T44 at the Puerto Rico Open presented by Banco Popular.

David Toms (68) made his 450th start on the PGA TOUR at this week's Zurich Classic of New Orleans. Toms was a popular winner here in his home state in 2001, when the event was played at English Turn.

John Senden (70) is T31 after the first round and is in good position to make the 150th cut of his career with another solid round on Friday.

Kenny Perry (69), making his first start since his playoff defeat at the Masters Tournament, is back in the thick of things with a solid first round. Perry had a hot streak in the middle of the round, posting birdies at holes 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 to get within a stroke of the lead, but bogeys at 15 and 17 halted his progress.

Kenny Perry posted his sixth consecutive sub-par round and his 18th round in the 60s this season.

Of the 18 players at 4-under or better, all but five were in the afternoon wave – Eric Axley (67), Jerry Kelly (68), David Toms (68), Ryan Moore (68) and Roland Thatcher (68).

Of the 18 players at 4-under or better, 12 are yet to win on TOUR. The six who have recorded victories are Parker McLachlin, Charles Howell III, Steve Stricker, Rod Pampling, Jerry Kelly and David Toms.

The Zurich Classic of New Orleans has produced four consecutive first-time PGA TOUR winners – Tim Petrovic/2005 (70), Chris Couch/2006 (71), Nick Watney/2007 (74) and Andres Romero/2008 (73).

Nick Watney (74) won this event two years ago and was one of the players to watch coming into the event, having made nine starts and finishing in the top-25 eight times, including a victory at the Buick Invitational. Watney now has two consecutive over-par rounds (73/Round 4/Masters). Watney was 1-under at the turn but scored four bogeys in a row (holes 2-5) on his back nine.

Danny Lee (76), the 18-year-old from New Zealand who won the 2008 U.S. Amateur Championship at Pinehurst, is making his debut as a professional. Lee is hoping to earn status on the PGA TOUR by earning enough money from his limited number of invitations to secure a card for 2010. Lee will need to earn the equivalent of 125th position on the 2008 money list (\$852,752), or land a victory to be fully exempt and avoid a trip to the Qualifying Tournament.

Several players have earned PGA TOUR cards without going through the PGA TOUR Qualifying Tournament. Here is a list of former U.S Amateur Champions who avoided the Q-School to make it to the TOUR.

Player	U.S. Amateur	Joined TOUR	TOUR wins
Scott Verplank	1984	1986	5
Phil Mickelson	1990	1992	36
Justin Leonard	1992	1994	12
Tiger Woods	1994/95/96	1996	66
Matt Kuchar	1997	2002	1
Hank Kuehne	1998	2004	0
David Gossett	1999	2001	1
Ryan Moore	2004	2006	0

Andres Romero (73) did not start his title defense the way he expected. The 2008 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year from Argentina was 3-over after his first eight holes before a 2-under 34 on his second nine. Fatigue may be a factor for Romero as he spent last week with Masters Champion, Angel Cabrera, in Cabrera's hometown of Cordoba, playing a tournament and celebrating Cabrera's victory.

The Kodak Challenge hole this week features the 215-yard, par-3, 17th hole at TPC Louisiana. In the Zurich Classic of New Orleans' 2005 debut at TPC Louisiana, Darron Stiles used a 7-iron to ace the hole in the third round. It was the first hole-in-one at TPC Louisiana during the tournament. In 2007, Daniel Chopra used a 5-iron in the final round for an ace. Last year, there were 41 birdies, 303 pars, 80 bogeys and 19 double-bogeys – but no aces.

Will MacKenzie birdied the 17th in the first round to co/lead with Steve Lowery in the Kodak Challenge at 6-under-par.

TPC Louisiana is currently working towards Audubon Certification and plans to be fully certified by the end of 2009. All of the lakes at TPC Louisiana are designed to capture all course run-off. All of the chemical/fertilizer mix and storage facilities, as well as the equipment wash areas, are fully contained to eliminate any hazardous waste release to the environment.

J.B. Holmes (71) recorded the longest drive of the day, a poke of 371-yards on the par-4 13th hole which measured 364-yards. He wound up making a par.

Eight players recorded bogey-free rounds – Charlie Wi (66), John Merrick (67), Charles Howell III (68), Steve Stricker (68), Jason Dufner (68), David Toms (68), Tim Wilkinson (71) and Scott Sterling (70).

The scoring average for the first round was 71.942. The early wave average was 71.45 compared with 72.44 in the afternoon.

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