



AP PHOTO

David Toms, foreground, lines up his putt with his caddie Scott Gneiser on the 10th green during the second round of Honda Classic golf tournament in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., on Friday.

Toms on top after second round

Mayfair capitalizes on bogey-free round, sits one behind leader

By TIM REYNOLDS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla.
Billy Mayfair says he's feeling good vibes this week, and it shows. As a standout junior player, Mayfair won at a few venues not far from Mirasol's Sunrise course, site of this week's Honda Classic. He prevailed at PGA National, right across the street, and captured the 1987 U.S. Amateur title a few miles away at Jupiter Hills. Now, he's in position for another big prize, his first tour win in eight seasons.

Mayfair shot a bogey-free round of 67 on Friday and finished alone in second place, one shot behind David Toms at the Honda's midway point after another day of fierce winds and fast greens.

"Yeah, we've had some high winds and there's been some tough scores out there and the conditions are tough," Mayfair said. "But for me, I just like playing that way. I like the way the greens are set up here a lot."

Mayfair finished with four birdies in his final five holes, taking advantage of the less-perilous front side of the course to climb the leaderboard.

And the front side continued to be kind to Toms, who made six birdies on that half, including a run of four straight for the second day in a row. He's got 11 birdies on his two jaunts across the first nine holes.

Toms shot his second straight round of 67 and is at 10-under par. Then there's Mayfair, and three shots behind him is a group of four golfers, including defending champion Pdraig Harrington (67) and Daniel Chopra, who turned in a five-birdie, one-eagle, no-bogey effort for a 65, the week's lowest round so far.

"You don't have to hit bad shots to miss these greens and especially in conditions like this, it just makes it even that more difficult," Chopra said. "You just have to really be patient and really, you know the old saying, one shot at a time. This golf course is one of those golf courses."

When Toms lost his patience, he nearly lost the lead.

He was rolling along after his sizzling 31 on the front, and another birdie pushed him to 11 under after 12 holes, allowing him to take a short-lived five-shot lead.

But an overaggressive approach on the 14th hole led to a bogey, and he chucked his approach at the 16th to drop another shot. At the par-5 17th, he struck a perfect drive, which landed in a very deep divot.

From there, his second went over the green, but he chipped in for eagle, and ensured he'd finish how he came in, leading the tournament.

"Did a lot of good stuff today," Toms said. "I hit some bad shots, but overall, another good, solid round of golf and put myself right there with a chance to win the golf tournament going to the weekend. You know, that's what I'm here to try to do. So I'm in good position so far."

Geoff Ogilvy and Mathias Gronberg, who were part of a four-way tie for the lead after the first round, each shot 71s on Friday and are four shots back, tied with Chopra and Harrington.

Lee Westwood (66), Luke Donald (67) and Paul Azinger (67) are among eight golfers tied at 5-under par.

Form

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

Hoosiers began a steady decline.

No longer the kings of the conference, the Hoosiers routinely finished in the middle of the Big Ten.

But Indiana's fortunes have started to reverse under coach Ray Looze, who arrived in 2002.

Determined to restore the program to its championship form, he scoured the area for promising talent. Among his first finds was Swander.

Recruiting Swander, Looze said, was the wisest decision he's made at Indiana.

Swander began his college career at Auburn University in 2002-03. He chose the Alabama school because it was one of the nation's top swimming programs.

The Tigers won the 1999 NCAA Championship and had won six straight Southeastern Conference championships when Swander committed to Auburn.

The fact that Swander's older sister, Laura Swander, was swimming at Auburn also influenced his decision.

But in December 2002, Swander decided to transfer

because he wasn't confident of accomplishing his goals.

Ironically, he didn't think he was good enough to be a champion at Auburn.

"It gave me a sense of what it was like to be a part of something great," Swander said of the Tigers' distinguished program. "It made me hungry knowing that I couldn't cut it down there."

Later that month, Swander met with Looze. Swander discussed his goals with the coach and cited his reasons for leaving Auburn.

At that point, Looze was convinced Swander was right for the IU program.

"He did a lot of the talking," Looze said. "He said he'd gone to Auburn with some dreams, but it wasn't the right place for him. He wanted to come to a place with a bigger role."

"At that point, we weren't real good. And I saw he was hungry. He was my kind of guy, an underdog, overlooked and cast off."

Indiana's fortunes started to reverse upon Swander's arrival. And the program has continued to progress.

Last year, the Hoosiers finished second in the Big Ten Championships, losing by just three points to Minnesota. This year, they avenged the loss with by crushing the runner-up Gophers

by 108.5 points.

"It was awesome," Swander said. "(Losing by) the three points was terrible last year. This year, every single team meeting we discussed it and talked about it. We were confident and ready."

"In front of the home crowd, it was awesome. I couldn't ask for a better way to end my regular season career as a Hoosier."

Looze also has a vivid recollection of the post-meet elation.

"I don't think anybody on the team will forget what it was like," he said. "To look up in the stands and seeing all the alumni pouring in, ... it was standing room only."

"If the fire marshal would have come, he probably would've shut us down."

Building his own legacy

At IU, Swander reached his dream of becoming a champion.

After winning his first Big Ten Swimmer of the Championships in 2003-04, he captured the award again this year. He's the only IU swimmer to win the award, which was created in 1991.

Swander also won IU's first national swimming title since 1980 when he won the 100-meter breaststroke at the Conoco Phillips Summer National Championships in 2003-04.

But Swander hasn't fulfilled all his goals yet.

He plans on doing more damage in the March 23-25 NCAA Division I Swimming and Diving Championships in Atlanta.

Swander will swim in the 100 and 200 breaststrokes and 200 individual medley. He will also compete on the Hoosiers' 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relays.

He hopes to bounce back from a disappointing performance at last year's NCAA championships. Seeded third in the 100 breaststroke heading in, he finished ninth. He also finished 10th in the 200 breaststroke.

"I let my nerves get the best of me," Swander said. "I didn't swim up to my potential ability."

But he gained more big-meet experience this year at the World University Games in Turkey. Following Looze's advice to participate in the August meet, Swander won two silver medals on the National B Team. He medaled in the 100-meter breaststroke and the 400 medley relay.

Swander's performance provided a confidence boost heading into his senior season, which he hopes to parlay into a strong showing at the NCAA championships.

His goal is to break the American record in the 100 breaststroke (51.86 seconds). He came close in the Big Ten Championships with a time of 52.6 seconds.

"There's definitely more in the tank," Swander said. "Hopefully, I have an on meet and I'll bring that out."

Swander also hopes to make the 2008 U.S. Olympics team. He's already qualified for the Olympic Trials in the 100 and 200 breaststroke with his times at the World University Games.

Swander, who graduates in December, plans to attend graduate school at IU and train for the Olympic trials.

Looze, who nearly made the 1992 Olympic team after a standout career at University of Southern California, admires Swander's competitive nature. And he likes the swimmer's chances of realizing his Olympic dream.

"He's a meet performer," Looze said. "If I have him go against the right competition and his back is against the wall, he really responds. He still hasn't reached his potential."

"You're only young once. There are very few opportunities to make an Olympic team. It's pretty special to even give it a shot."

Cubs

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

really playing the way I felt they could play all along," Franklin coach Dave Clark said. "We just kind of kept as positive as we could be, and at the same time, we pushed them to get to the point where they are at the moment."

"Hopefully, that will continue." Players trace the turnaround to a team meeting after the Johnson County Tournament.

After losing to Center Grove in the Jan. 14 championship game, players conducted a meeting in the coach's office, with no coaches present.

In frank terms, they spelled out their differences, acknowledged selfish inclinations and resolved to put it all in their wake and salvage their season.

They did just that, and the results speak for themselves.

Franklin has won nine of 12 since

the county tournament and went onto win a competitive sectional that included Greenwood, Center Grove and Franklin Central.

Moreover, the Cubs haven't lost since Feb. 9 and bring the second-longest win streak to the regional field.

Only top-ranked, two-time defending state champion Lawrence North (25-0) has won more in a row than Franklin.

"Our goal all year was definitely to win the sectional, and to be honest, none of us really focused on that until down the stretch," Long said.

"We all got together and started talking and decided that we're going to start putting this thing together as a team to get this thing going down the stretch, and that's pretty much exactly what we did."

Senior center Ben Gordon has not-so-fond memories of the toll intrasquad squabbling was taking, but he relishes where the united resolve has taken the Cubs.

"Socially, we were having some problems within the team,"

Gordon said. "We figured that wasn't working. We just decided that we needed to end all this and go out there and play and have fun as a team."

Franklin's resurgence has drawn the attention of Pike coach Larry Bullington, who insists the Red Devils aren't overlooking the Cubs.

"They're just a team that's playing very well right now," Bullington said. "They lost some close games early by real close margins, but they've won seven in a row right now."

Offensively, Franklin is a balanced team that features double-figure scorers in junior point guard Adrian Moss (15.9 points per game), Long (15.1 ppg) and Gordon (13 ppg).

One of the area's top playmakers, Moss also averages six assists and 2.5 steals. He sets an offensive and defensive tone that makes the Cubs difficult to deal with at both ends of the court.

But he's not Franklin's only threat.

Long is one of the state's top

three-point shooters. He's made 105 of 211 attempts (.498 percent) and is among the county's top five scorers.

Gordon is also among county scoring leaders and is one of the area's leading rebounders at 11.2 per game.

Senior Adam Miller and juniors Brandon Foster, Eric Lazzell and Patrick Woods are also instrumental players on a team that has truly learned to function as one.

"It's a team effort, one through 12," Clark said. "That was kind of the topic after the Center Grove loss in the county tourney. I was pretty upset with our play in the county tourney and kind of let them know about it at the end of that game."

"We still had faith and belief in the kids as a coaching staff and never lost sight of that ourselves. We just felt like the potential was there."

Franklin gets its toughest test of the season against Pike, which has won three state championships since 1998. The most

recent was 2003.

Featuring double-figure scorers in seniors Curtis White (13 ppg), Reece Cheatham (12.2 ppg) and Tony James (10 ppg) and junior Jeff Teague (11 ppg), the Red Devils are one of the state's most explosive offensive teams.

Two of their losses this season have come against Lawrence North. The other was a Dec. 10 setback at Bloomington South.

"The bottom line is, we're a very unselfish team, and we're a deep team," Bullington said. "We can go nine or 10 guys deep on most nights. We've just got a lot of guys who can play."

So do the unranked Cubs, who embrace their underdog status.

"It makes us feel like we can go in there and play like we have nothing to lose, because no one expects us to come out and win," Long said. "No one really expects us to go out there and compete against Pike."

"I guess we really like that, because we know we can play with anybody as long as we play together."



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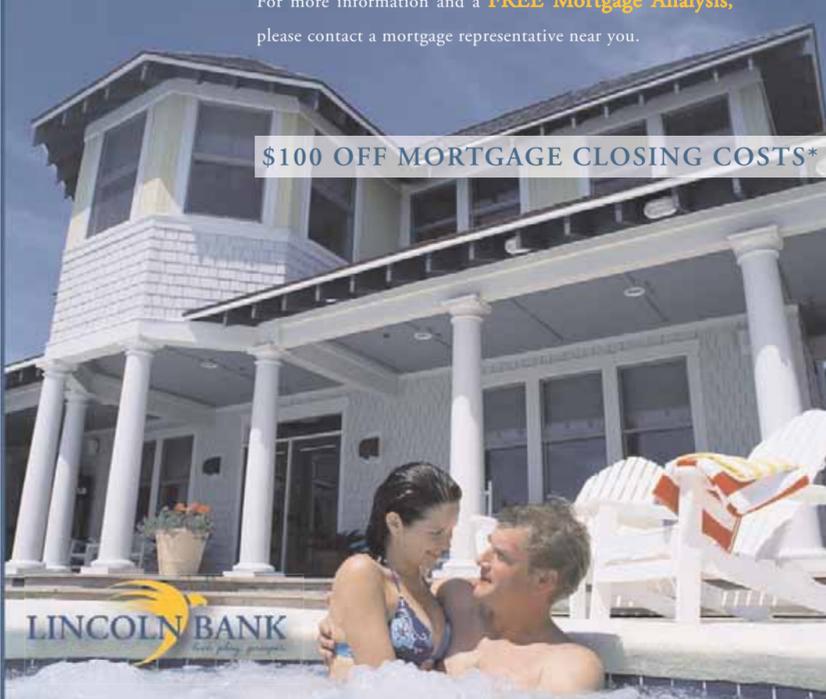
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