

PGA season begins with no guarantees

By DOUG FERGUSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KAPALUA, Hawaii

Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson are absent by choice. So many others are not at the season-opening Mercedes Championships because they failed to meet the toughest criteria on the PGA Tour.

This is for winners only. Golf offers no guarantees, and there is no better reminder than to scan the list of results at Kapalua last year to see who isn't back.

Ernie Els nearly won twice in Hawaii last year, but his season ended in July with surgery on his knee and no PGA Tour victories to his credit for the first time since 2001.

Jonathan Kaye was on the verge

TOUR OPENER

What: The Mercedes Championships, the opening event on the 2006 PGA Tour schedule

Where: Kapalua, Hawaii
When: Today through Sunday
Course: Kapalua Resort, The Plantation Course (7,411 yards, par 73)
Purse: \$5.4 million
Television: 7 to 10:30 tonight through Saturday and 7 to 10 p.m. Sunday, ESPN

of getting into a playoff at Kapalua until he muffed a chip on the final hole and finished second. He never came close to winning the rest of the year.

Mike Weir will have to wait two weeks to start his season. Zach

Johnson, a promising rookie in 2004, went winless as a sophomore. Adam Scott won a tournament that didn't count. For all the fist pumps and theatrical moments for Chris DiMarco, none included posing with a trophy.

Of the 31 players in the field at Kapalua last year, only eight of them will be teeing it up today on the Plantation course to start the new season.

Throw in three guys who are taking this week off — Woods, Mickelson and Retief Goosen — and just more than one-third of the players were eligible.

"There were eight guys that played last year? That means 20 new guys? Wow," said Brad Faxon, who is one of those 20 after having won the Buick Championship for

his first Tour victory in four years. "That just shows it's harder to win," Faxon added. "And there are a few guys that aren't here that win a lot."

There are 48 chances to get into the Mercedes Championships. Woods and Mickelson combined to take away 10 of those opportunities, including three of the majors. Vijay Singh won four times, and other multiple winners were Justin Leonard, Padraig Harrington, Kenny Perry and Bart Bryant, all of whom won twice.

If the veterans looks over their shoulder, they will find 12 players at Kapalua here for the first time. That list includes Sean O'Hair, a Q-school graduate a year ago, and Jason Gore, who went from nowhere to the final

group of the U.S. Open and back to nowhere, until his meteoric rise to the big leagues.

Gore is new, but he gets it. "I was a little worried when the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve, going into a new year," Gore said. "That's what makes golf a great game. You're only as good as the last shot you hit. You move on from there and hopefully get off to a good start this week, see what happens."

The great thing about golf is that no one knows where it all will lead.

At this time a year ago, Woods had gone 15 months without a stroke-play victory and was a distant second to Singh in the world ranking. The hype was the Big Five — Woods, Singh, Mick-

elson, Els and Goosen — and who would emerge as the best player in golf.

By year end, Woods had six victories, two majors and an overwhelming margin at No. 1.

The new season gets under way today with the attention already shifting to several storylines for 2006, from the return to traditional major championship sites like Winged Foot (U.S. Open) and Medinah (PGA Championship) to who makes the Ryder Cup team and whether Els can bounce back and the 42-year-old Singh can hang on.

The immediate question is whether Stuart Appleby can become the first player in 50 years to win this elite tournament three straight times.

RACING

MOORESVILLE, N.C.

Former Cup champ Elliott will race in Daytona 500

MB2 Motorsports announced Wednesday that its No. 36 entry for the Daytona 500 on Feb. 19 will be driven by Bill Elliott, a two-time winner of NASCAR's biggest race.

Elliott will also drive the MB2-built No. 36 Chevrolet in the Feb. 11 Budweiser Shootout at Daytona, an invitational race for 2005 pole winners and former Shootout champs. Elliott earned his automatic berth as a result of winning the Shootout in 1987.

Frank Stoddard will serve as Elliott's crew chief for both races and also oversee Elliott's Daytona test session next week.

Elliott, the 1988 NASCAR Cup champion, has run a limited schedule the past two years. His most recent Daytona 500 appearance was in 2003.

A 16-time winner of NASCAR's most popular driver award, Elliott has competed in 25 Daytona 500 races.



ELLIOTT

OLYMPICS

CHICAGO

Chicago mayor says city should consider Olympics

Mayor Richard Daley said Wednesday a bid for the 2016 Summer Olympics could be a cooperative effort involving sporting venues in cities such as Champaign-Urbana, or a regional bid with Wisconsin and Indiana.

Daley first talked about the possibility of Chicago bidding for the Olympics in July, and last month he said luring a second NFL franchise to the city would make it more worthwhile to build a domed stadium that could also be a component of an Olympics bid.

On Wednesday, at an event announcing the city is becoming a community partner of the U.S. Olympic Committee, Daley said he expects to soon name members of an exploratory committee.

That group will examine the experiences of other recent and upcoming hosts, along with determining the kinds of facilities that would have to be built, the transit improvements that would need to be made and the long-term economic benefits, he said.

Daley said a new stadium in Chicago is not a prerequisite for an Olympic bid.

• Injury

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

The Boilermakers were already without expected starters Carl Landry, Tarrance Crump and David Teague, who are all out for the season.

"I don't have sympathy for other people when they have injuries," Purdue coach Matt Painter said. "I still think we have enough guys to win basketball games."

Purdue was well aware of Doyle's abilities, even if his previous career high was 14 points.

"We did think about Doyle," Painter said. "He has that old-man game that you see with guys like that at 'noon' ball. But it's effective. He's a good player. That's just his style."

The Wildcats (8-4, 1-0 Big Ten) were without second-leading scorer Mohamed Hachad, who is recovering from an appendectomy, but Doyle filled his absence, more than doubling his average of 9.1 points.

"I knew my role would change with Mo out," Doyle said.

Minnow had three assists in three minutes as Purdue led 7-2 when he went down. After the game, the Boilermakers said Minnow did not have a fracture but was in pain. He was to be examined again today.

In other NCAA action

MEN

No. 22 Pittsburgh 100 Notre Dame 97, 2 OT

PITTSBURGH — Ronald Ramon hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 15 seconds left in the second overtime, and No. 22 Pittsburgh withstood Chris Quinn's 37 points and frantic Notre Dame comebacks at the end of regulation and the first overtime to rally for a victory.

Aaron Gray scored a career-high 25 points, and Carl Krauser added 21 points, but it was freshman Sam Young who did much of unbeaten Pitt's important scoring. He had only two points until late in the second half but finished with 15 points and 12 rebounds as Pitt opened a season 12-0 for only the fifth time in its 100 years of basketball.

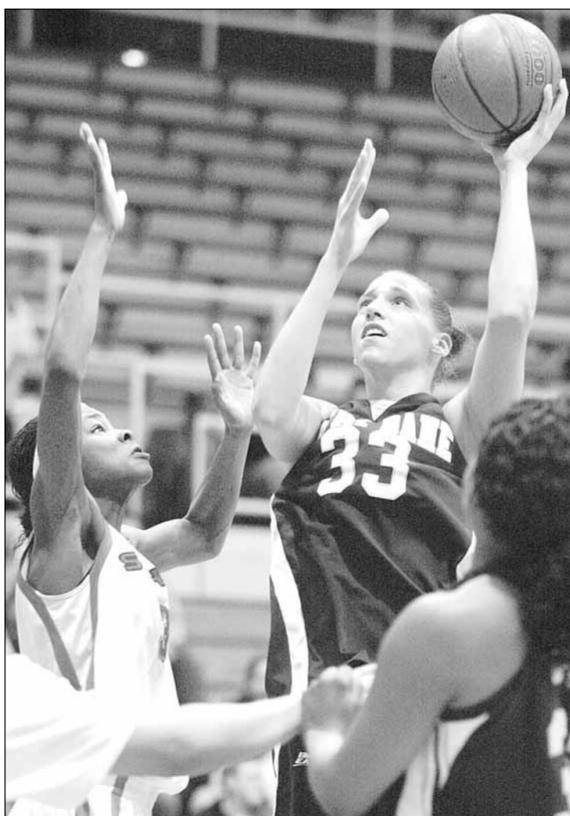
Quinn scored 30 of his 37 points after halftime, including 16 consecutive Irish points late in the second half.

Notre Dame, which came in on a seven-game winning streak, rallied from nine points behind with 45 seconds left in the second half to tie it at 77 on two late 3-pointers by Colin Falls.

IUPUI 82

Oakland (Mich.) 81

ROCHESTER, Mich. — Brandon Cameron made two free throws with 3.6 seconds left to give IUPUI a victory against Oakland in a Mid-Continent Conference game.



AP PHOTO

Notre Dame's Melissa D'Amico, right, shoots over St. John's defender Angela Clark during the first half of Wednesday's Big East game in New York.

Cameron scored nine of his career-high 21 points in the final 4:09 to help the Jaguars (7-7, 2-0 Mid-Con) overcome a 10-point deficit.

Oakland (5-9, 0-2) led by as many as 19 points in the first half but fell for the eighth time in nine games. The Golden Grizzlies have not beaten a Division I opponent since Nov. 30.

George Hill, IUPUI's leading scorer, had 20 points before leaving the game with a sprained left knee with 6:07 left. David Barlow added 16 points, and Brandon Cole scored 13, including back-to-back 3-pointers in the final 90 seconds.

Cincinnati 82 DePaul 60

CINCINNATI — Forwards Eric Hicks and Cedric McGowan dominated up front, leading Cincinnati to a win against DePaul in the schools' Big East basketball debut.

Cincinnati (12-2) has won nine in a row with solid defense and a balanced lineup. The Bearcats showed their new conference that they've got a little bit of everything.

Jihad Muhammad scored 20 points in a fastbreak attack that featured four players in double digits. Hicks had 20 points and 14 rebounds, and McGowan added 13 points and 20 rebounds, helping Cincinnati dominate the boards 53-35.

DePaul (7-5) hasn't won in Cincinnati since Feb. 20, 1992.

Akron 66 Ball State 62

MUNCIE — Romeo Travis scored 28 points to lead Akron as the Zips overcame a 10-point Ball State lead in the second half to win the Mid-American Conference opener for both teams.

Ball State (4-5, 0-1 MAC) opened a 58-48 lead when Pat Nelson hit a jumper with 9:08 remaining. Travis then sparked the comeback for Akron (7-3, 1-0) by scoring five points on two field goals and a free throw during the next two minutes.

WOMEN

St. John's 66 No. 12 Notre Dame 63

NEW YORK — Angela Clark scored 18 points as St. John's held on to beat No. 12 Notre Dame, the Red Storm's first victory against the Fighting Irish.

Tara Walker added 14 points and Monique McLean had 13 for the Red Storm (11-2, 1-1 Big East), who lost their first 15 meetings with Notre Dame (9-3, 0-1).

Melissa D'Amico had 14 points for the Fighting Irish, who were coming off a 62-51 loss to No. 1 Tennessee last week. Crystal Erwin had 11 points and 12 rebounds for Notre Dame, which finished with a 41-21 advantage on the boards.

Walker had two 3s in the first 56 seconds of the second half to give St. John's the lead for good at 38-37.

ciation's international committee would decide the makeup of the Olympic team Jan. 14 after the women's free skate. A member could be replaced until Jan. 16.

Kwan, however, has been told by her doctor not to return to the ice until Jan. 13. That doesn't leave much time to prove herself.

Dr. Leisure Yu, who is treating Kwan, expects a quick recovery. "This is a very common injury among athletes and is unrelated to the strained ligament in her right hip that Michelle sustained in September, which is now doing very well," Yu said. "I examined Michelle last Friday and found that the condition of the groin pull has greatly improved. There have been no complications, and there is no reason why it shouldn't fully heal."

"At the current rate of improvement ... I'm confident that she will be in top physical condition for the Olympics."

COLLEGE SPORTS

INDIANAPOLIS

Voris picked to rebuild woeful Butler program

Jeff Voris was hired Wednesday as Butler's new football coach and will try to revive a program that was winless last season and has gone 3-30 the past three years.

Voris spent the past five seasons as the head coach at Carroll College, Wis., leading the Pioneers to a 6-4 finish this season, their first winning campaign since 1996. He has 16 years of coaching experience, including graduate assistant stints at Illinois and Texas.

Voris was a four-year starting quarterback at DePauw and a three-year team most valuable player. He holds school records for passing yards (6,035), touchdown passes (56), pass completions (504), pass attempts (910) and total offense (5,754).

Voris replaces Kit Cartwright, who was fired with three games left in the season but coached until the final game. Cartwright went 7-36 in four years at Butler.



VORIS

COLUMBUS, Ohio

Ohio State has nation's largest athletic program

Ohio State's athletic program is the nation's top collegiate sports moneymaker, a newspaper reported.

Ohio State made \$89.7 million from ticket sales, royalties, advertising, broadcast agreements and other sources during the 2004-05 academic year, about \$50,000 more than second-place Texas, according to U.S. Department of Education statistics analyzed by The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch.

The Buckeyes' top rival, Michigan, placed third on the list at \$78.4 million, followed by Florida (\$77.4 million) and Wisconsin (\$75.3 million).

Ohio State has the most athletes and teams among the NCAA's Division I schools.

"You always want to be the biggest and the best," said athletic director Gene Smith, in charge of a self-sufficient department that has more than 900 student-athletes in 36 sports.

Ohio State sports receive no money from the government or the university.

Georgia had the nation's most profitable sports program.

FOOTBALL

PITTSBURGH

Former Steeler Swann will run for governor

Former Steelers star Lynn Swann declared his candidacy for Pennsylvania governor Wednesday in the city where he made his name in professional football.

He said that he made up his mind to run in the fall, after spending months weighing support at events around the state.

Swann, a Hall of Fame receiver and longtime TV football commentator, faces three other candidates in seeking the Republican nomination for governor; his first run for political office.

The winner of the May 16 primary would likely face Democrat Gov. Ed Rendell, who is expected to seek a second four-year term.

If successful in his first bid for political office, Swann would become Pennsylvania's first black governor. His announcement came as no surprise.



SWANN

TENNIS

HONG KONG

Serena Williams loses in Hong Kong exhibition

Serena Williams won only four games in a 6-3, 6-1 loss Wednesday to Elena Dementieva at the Champions Challenge exhibition tournament in Hong Kong.

Dementieva earned her first career win against the seven-time Grand Slam singles champion.

It marked a disappointing start for Williams, who was sidelined by a left knee injury late last year. The 11th-ranked Williams played only 28 matches in 2005 and didn't qualify for the season-ending WTA Championships.

Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport relied on a strong serve to beat Nicole Pietrangola of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-2.

Both Dementieva and Williams got off to a slow start. After trading service breaks, Dementieva held in the fourth game and broke Williams again for a 5-1 lead.

Williams held her first service game in the seventh, then Dementieva lost her serve on a double fault for a 5-3 lead. Williams then served three double faults and flubbed a backhand.

• Kwan

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

level. Nationals is one of my favorite events," she said. "But this is how it goes, you suffer an injury and you're sidelined for a few weeks."

"The last month has been really frustrating for me," said Kwan, who most recently competed in early December. "After about a week of skating, I pulled my groin, and I just haven't been the same since. I haven't been able to spin or jump since the 19th."

"But the good news is that my hip is feeling well and that I feel I'm capable of being 100 percent for the Olympics. That's why I put this petition in. I have a chance to win."

A chance to win at Turin, yes. But only a slight chance.

Attention ADVERTISERS

Do you know you can run an ad this size in more than 80 daily and weekly newspapers STATEWIDE with circulation of more than 760,000 homes for only \$850?

One order, one bill, one check! We do the rest. Call this newspaper, or Hoosier State Press Association.

(317) 803-4772. Ask about the ICAN Plus program.

NEW YEAR



Drive into the New Year with a new career. Schneider National has unlimited driving opportunities available, choose the one right for you!

- Experience rewarded but not required
- Company-provided CDL training for qualified candidates
- \$35,500-\$58,500 (depending on experience)
- Immediate benefits for experienced drivers

Apply Online @ schneiderjobs.com
Or Call 1-800-44-PRIDE (1-800-447-7433)
Sun. 11am-5pm (Central Time)

SCHNEIDER NATIONAL

...for new opportunities.

EOE M/F/D/V