

COUNTDOWN – 3 WEEKS



FIRST WIN FOR TOM WATSON IN FLA.:

Tom Watson, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, claimed his ninth career Champions Tour victory over the weekend at the Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am at the TPC of Tampa Bay, just outside of Tampa, Fla. It was the first professional win for Watson in the state of Florida in 93 professional attempts. Watson, who owns 39 career PGA Tour victories, shot a 1-under 70 in the final round Sunday to beat **Jay Haas** and **Andy Bean**. Fighting cold and windy conditions, Watson, who said "I've never been this cold, even at the British Open", had to finish his second round on Sunday morning before heading out for the final 18. Only five players finished under par. Watson finished second at Valencia Country Club in 2002, losing to **Tom Kite** in a playoff. Haas and Bean are both scheduled to play in this year's **AT&T Champions Classic**, as well as Kite, the defending champ. Haas, the 2006 Champions Tour Player of the Year, finished tied for 17th last year at Valencia Country Club, while Bean, playing on a sponsor's exemption finished tied for seventh, including a round of 65 on Saturday.

O'MEARA'S DEBUT:

Having turned 50 in January, **Mark O'Meara**, a 16-time winner on the PGA Tour, made his Champions Tour debut over the weekend, finishing in a tie for 38th at 9 over par. The former Long Beach State All-American has not yet committed to the **AT&T Champions Classic**.

UP NEXT ON THE CHAMPIONS TOUR:

The early Florida swing concludes this week with The Ace Group Classic in Naples. Defending champion **Loren Roberts** made history in last year's tournament when he became the first Champions Tour player to win the first three events to start a season. Roberts is currently second in the season-long Charles Schwab Cup points race, trailing **Jay Haas** by just four points (353-349). After this weekend, the Champions Tour players enjoy a weekend off before heading back to the west coast for two California events, including the **AT&T Champions Classic** March 12-18.

THE NAME GAME:

Since 2001, when the tournament began its run at Valencia Country Club, six different players have finished in the runner-up spot. **Tom Watson**, as mentioned earlier, did it in 2002. **Gil Morgan** did it twice, 2003 and 2006. The other four players are **Jose Maria Canizares** (2001), **Larry Nelson** (2004) and **Mark McNulty** and **D.A. Weibring**, who tied in 2005. All four of these players are scheduled to play in 2007 with the hopes of breaking through to the top spot like Morgan did in 2004, one year after his runner-up finish to **Tom Purtzer**.

DID YOU KNOW?:

Mark Johnson, who lives in Helendale, Calif., approximately 100 miles from Valencia CC, drove a Budweiser beer truck for 18 years before giving professional golf a try. Johnson, who won the California State Amateur in 1996, finished 33rd on the Champions Tour Money List last year. He gained national notoriety with a breakthrough win at the Toshiba Classic in 2005 at Newport Beach, Calif., one year after officially joining the Champions Tour. Born in Barstow, Calif., he finished tied for 17th last year in the **AT&T Champions Classic**.

QUOTING THE DEFENDING CHAMP:

"I think Valencia is one of the most, probably the most, challenging golf course on the Champions Tour. Its got plenty of length and some very challenging greens. I think, for me, it's a wonderful golf course, and I've played very well there over the years. I've won there twice and have some great memories of that golf course. I always look forward to going back." **Tom Kite**

TICKET SALES:

Tickets for this year's 54-hole stroke play event are available for purchase online at www.attchampionsclassic.com with a variety of ticket packages available. Tickets, which start as low as \$15, can also be purchased by calling 661-260-1897. A third option is to purchase a ticket through one of the Champions for Charity partners, including the Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital, Special Olympics Southern California/Santa Clarita Chapter, Domestic Violence Center of Santa Clarita, Santa Clarita Valley Committee on Aging Senior Center, the Santa Clarita Food Pantry, Girl Scouts, First Tee-Pasadena, Canyon High School Boys Golf, Hart High School Girls Golf, Valencia High School Boys Golf, Laynes Legacy, Boys and Girls Club of Santa Clarita, AT&T Champions Classic Beneficiary and the SCV Youth Project.