

SPORTS

Mitchell claims first PGA crown

O'Meara ends 8-year drought

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla., March 4, (Agencies): Keith Mitchell sank a clutch 15-foot birdie putt at the last hole to win his first PGA Tour event with a one-stroke victory at the Honda Classic on Sunday.

The second-year professional edged out Brooks Koepka and Rickie Fowler with a final round 67 to finish at nine-under 271.

The more experienced Koepka (66) and Fowler (67) put the pressure on but Mitchell denied them a chance at a playoff at PGA National with his long putt.

The 27-year-old began his day with back-to-back bogeys, then roared back with birdies at four of the final seven holes.

"I've been close before and I let my emotions take over," Mitchell told NBC television. "I bogeyed the first couple of holes and I said, 'Not again.'"

He finished the day with a big smile to go with six birdies and three bogeys.

"I was trying to focus on what was going on," Mitchell said. "My mind started wandering there a little bit at the end ... and then I hit a great putt."

Ryan Palmer (63) and Lucas Glover (66) shared fourth at seven-under 273 and 56-year-old Vijay Singh (70) was sixth at six-under as he missed a chance to become the oldest player to win a PGA Tour event.

A thrilling final nine holes saw as many as six players tied for the lead at Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Palmer set the early tone with his splendid early finish that included eight birdies and a bogey in the round of 63.

As he watched from the clubhouse for several hours, things heated up on the tough back nine.

Third-round co-leader Wyndham Clark (72-275) and the surging Koepka and Fowler, who made a 45-foot birdie putt at the 17th, also were tied for the top at one point.

Finally it came down to Mitchell, Koepka and Fowler.

Koepka birdied two of his last three holes, and Fowler closed with four birdies in eight holes.

Mitchell birdied the par-three 15th hole from four feet and then made the clutch putt at 18 even though his tee shot ended up in a bunker.

Singh lost a chance to be in the mix when he hit his tee shot badly at the 17th and the ball rolled into the water.

Mark O'Meara seized control with five birdies on the front nine and closed with a 7-under 66 for a four-shot victory Sunday in the Cologuard Classic, his first victory

on the PGA Tour Champions in more than eight years.

At 62 years, 1 month, 17 days, he's the fourth-oldest winner in the history of the 50-and-over tour.

"I knew there was going to be a lot of pressure," O'Meara said. "To play the front nine the way I did, I'm really happy."

O'Meara had a one-shot lead going into the final round and stretched it to four going to the back nine. He was never seriously challenged the rest of the way to pick up his first victory since the Senior Players Championship toward the end of the 2010 season. The Hall of Famer went 8 years, 4 months, 20 days between victories, the second-longest gap on the tour.

"It's nice to finally come back out on top, especially today," O'Meara said. "Starting the day at 10 under and having the lead, a lot of guys that are very good players right behind me, to get up and shoot 7-under par with one bogey is a very special day for me."

O'Meara finished at 17-under 202 on Omni Tucson National's Catalina Course. He matched the tour record with eight straight birdies in an opening 66 and shot 70 in breezy conditions Saturday.

"I've had like 15 or 16 seconds, so that's been pretty disappointing," O'Meara said. "A lot of times when I finish second, it wasn't because I shot 71, 2, or 3. Guys just, they go low, and you just can't take your foot off the pedal out here because somebody's going to shoot a good score and come up from behind you."

Darren Clarke held a 50-foot birdie putt on the 18th for a 68 to tie for second with Willie Wood, Kirk Triplett and Scott McCarron, who each had 69. Defending champion Steve Stricker had a 70 to tie for sixth at 11 under.

"Making that on the last, it's great," Clarke said. "I'm having a blast out here. I'm really enjoying myself. Working hard at it and at the same time enjoying myself, so it's all pretty good at the moment."

Former baseball star John Smoltz tied for 53rd at 1 over in his tour debut, closing with a 73. The 51-year-old Hall of Fame pitcher got into the field on a sponsor exemption.

"I fell prey to a couple holes that got to me, but I learned a lot and I'm overall really thrilled with some parts of my game, and the other parts, I've got to work on," Smoltz said. "My strength coming in was driver and it became my weakness, so that's a little bit of a bummer, but I learned again a lot of things. I felt comfortable the second and third day. Very close to putting up some pretty good numbers."

GOLF



Washington Nationals' Trea Turner (7) follows through on a ground-rule double to score Victor Robles during the third inning of an exhibition spring training baseball game against the Houston Astros on March 3 in West Palm Beach, Fla. (AP)

Nationals beat Astros

Gardner, Judge power Yankees past Tigers

NEW YORK, March 4, (RTS): Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge each hit two homers as host New York notched a 7-1 victory over Detroit on Sunday at Tampa, Fla.

Gardner and Judge hit back-to-back homers off Tigers left-hander Daniel Norris to start the bottom of the first. Gardner hit a second solo blast off Norris in the second inning while Judge hit a two-run shot off right-hander Spencer Turnbull in the fifth.

Detroit pitchers served up six homers overall as Gary Sanchez and Isiah Gilliam also sent deep. The lone run for the Tigers was courtesy of Ronny



Colorado Rockies' Ian Desmond (left), is safe ahead of the throw to San Francisco Giants third baseman Evan Longoria (right), after a triple during the fourth inning of a spring baseball game in Scottsdale, Ariz on March 3. (AP)

BASEBALL

Rodriguez's fifth-inning blast.

Blue Jays 5, Yankees (ss) 2
Billy McKinney and Rowdy Tellez each hit homers as Toronto defeated visiting New York at Dunedin, Fla. Luke Voit homered for the Yankees.

Nationals 4, Astros 2
Trea Turner drove in three runs and also scored on Brian Dozier's single as host Washington defeated Houston at West Palm Beach, Fla. Astros right-hander Gerrit Cole struck out three and walked one during two hitless innings.

Kitayama shines on final day

OMAN, March 4, (RTS): American Kurt Kitayama produced a fine comeback and a strong finish on a marathon to claim a one-shot victory at the Oman Open, his second European Tour title of the season.

Kitayama carded a final round 70 for a seven-under-par total of 281 at Al Mouj Golf to finish one shot ahead of the quartet of Spain's Jorge Campillo, France's Clement Sordet, Germany's Maximilian Kieffer and Paraguay's Fabrizio Zanotti.

"It feels great to win. My comeback this morning helped set up this final round. I was back in contention and with it being continuous rounds it helped me cruise into the next one," Kitayama, winner of the Mauritius Open, said.

Kitayama had been in a strong position after 18 holes but suffered a dismal start to his third round on Saturday with a quadruple bogey eight and dropped shots in the next two holes before bad light ended play.

Rays 10, Pirates 4
Avisail Garcia homered and

drove in four runs to lead Tampa Bay past host Pittsburgh at

Bradenton, Fla. Joey Wendle also went deep for the Rays while Pablo Reyes homered for the Pirates.

Braves 6, Marlins 5
Andres Blanco drilled a one-out homer in the bottom of the ninth inning as Atlanta edged Miami at Kissimmee, Fla. Adam Duvall hit two of the Braves' five homers while Deven Marrero had a two-run single for the Marlins.

Mets 10, Cardinals 8
Dominic Smith went 3-for-4 with a homer and four RBIs to help New York slide past host St. Louis at Jupiter, Fla. Matt Carpenter and Tyler O'Neill hit homers for the Cardinals.

Red Sox 9, Twins (ss) 7
Tony Renda hit a three-run homer during Boston's seven-run sixth inning as the Red Sox beat visiting Minnesota at Fort Myers, Fla. Adam Rosales and Brian Navarreto went deep for the Twins.

Phillies 3, Twins (ss) 3
Right-hander Jake Arrieta struck out four during three perfect innings as Philadelphia and host Minnesota tied at Fort Myers, Fla. Andrew Romine hit a two-run homer for the Phillies and Jonathan Schoop hit a two-run blast for the Twins.



Keith Mitchell holds up his trophy after winning the Honda Classic golf tournament on March 3 in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (AP)

Angels reportedly mull 10-yr \$350 mln extension for Trout

WASHINGTON, March 4, (RTS): With Bryce Harper and Manny Machado recently signing deals worth \$300 million and \$330 million respectively, the price tag for Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout figures to have gone up.

The two-time American League MVP has two seasons remaining on a six-year, \$144.5 million deal but has not indicated whether he intends to remain with the team after 2020.

But The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal reports the Angels recently have at least considered offering Trout a 10-year extension worth \$350 million. Combined with the final two years of his existing contract, that would work out to 12 years and \$416 million.

Trout grew up in the small town of Millville, N.J., located about 50 miles from Philadelphia, and is a die-hard Philadelphia Eagles' fan. Rumors of Trout having interest in playing for the Phillies someday gained momentum with Harper subtly lobbying for Trout to join him in Philadelphia when he becomes a free agent.

Los Angeles Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw said he felt good after a throwing session Sunday.

The 30-year-old has been limited this spring because of

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inflammation in his throwing shoulder, but he is expected to be ready for Opening Day against the **Arizona Diamondbacks** on March 28. That schedule appears to be intact after Kershaw's successful session.

Kershaw is entering his 12th season, all with the Dodgers. He has a lifetime record of 153-69 with a 2.39 ERA. He has 2,275 strikeouts in 2,096-1/3 innings.

Texas Rangers right-hander **Luke Farrell** is expected to see a dentist and facial surgeon on Monday after having his jaw broken by a line drive during a spring training game on Saturday.

Farrell, 27, was struck by comebacker off the bat of **San Francisco Giants** prospect **Jalen Miller** during the ninth inning Saturday in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Farrell fell to the ground, but walked off the field under his own power. Tests revealed a non-displaced fracture of the jaw, according to the Rangers. He was released from the hospital after a few hours, and the Dallas Morning News reported that he is expected to see a specialist Monday.

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