

Osprey Valley Open earns raves

Written By JAKE COURTEPATTE

Hole-outs on the 72nd-hole, career low rounds, and Mackenzie Tour records paved the way for an exhilarating inaugural event at PGA Canada's Osprey Valley Open.

At the end of the four-day event, held at Osprey Valley Golf Club in Caledon, it was 27-year old Tyler McCumber who hoisted the trophy for his first-ever PGA Tour Canada victory.

"I'm very happy with the week, and obviously happy with the result," said McCumber, a resident of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. "I've been working really hard on my game lately and the mental stuff too, and I felt like I really executed that well, so it was nice to put it together and sort of reap the rewards for it."

After day one on Thursday, it was recent Alabama graduate Lee Hodges that was very much in the driver's seat, carding a career-low 62 to take a two-shot lead into the second day.

Yet it was McCumber's astonishing second-day 61, including an eagle on the opening par five and nine birdies with nary a bogey, which gave him his first lead on the Mackenzie Tour.

"It was a fun day, I sort of did everything pretty solid," said McCumber of his Friday round, his lowest on tour so far this season. "You can't be tentative, you have to keep firing and keep trying to make birdies."

The birdies kept coming on Saturday: despite losing three of his five-stroke lead before even teeing off, McCumber opened with a 33 on the front nine, including a birdie on the opening hole for the third day in a row.

"I came out with a birdie to get the momentum going," said McCumber. "It's pretty favorable to somebody who can hit it straight and longer, and this week I hit it pretty straight."

With a lead of seven strokes heading into Sunday, the most by any player in the PGA Tour era of the Mackenzie Tour, poor weather conditions tested even the best of the field on a wet Sunday.

"I changed shoes and socks at the turn and didn't have a single dry towel, so it was a grind," McCumber said. "I was kind of lucky because I had a tournament early in the year in Dominican where I was in the last group and I was in a similar weather situation, so I had something to draw back on to stay focused and to do the right stuff."

The theatrics began before McCumber even reached the final few holes, when American Michael Gellerman holed out from around one-hundred yards for eagle on the eighteenth-hole par four, giving him the lone position in second place.

"That was a really good wedge shot to that pin because the front of the green is severely slopped, and he landed it past the hole where long over the green is so bad," said McCumber on Gellerman's eagle. "It was a ballsy shot and I had to refocus and sort of try to get it in in three."

McCumber walked to the eighteenth tee up by four strokes, opting to lay up on the final par five hole, eventually two-putting for bogey to secure a one-shot victory over Gellerman.

Winning his first Mackenzie Tour event, McCumber is no stranger to the winner's circle, having three PGA Latinoamerica titles under his belt.

Cougar Collins, the lone amateur from Caledon competing in the tournament, missed the cut by six strokes despite shooting solid

back-to-back 72s.

As for the course itself, the first to host a PGA Tour Canada event in the Toronto area, the pros had plenty of positive thoughts to reflect on their experience.

Tim Madigan, a seasoned Web.com Tour pro, remarked on the size and beauty of the course.

?With 54 holes here, it's absolutely massive. You turn into the facility and drive 2 kilometres to get to the clubhouse, that goes to show how massive this place is, and it is a beauty here.?