



NATIONWIDE TOUR STORYLINES – Week of May 5th

Fort Smith Classic presented by Stephens, Inc.

May 5 - 11

Hardscrabble Country Club, Ft. Smith, AR

Purse: \$550,000 First Prize: \$99,000

10th of 30 events

2007 Winner: Jay Williamson

TOUR'S IMPACT ON PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP ON THE RISE – 59% of the players (85 of 144) in this week's PLAYERS Championship field on the PGA TOUR are Nationwide Tour alums. This is up from 54% last year (79 of 145). The percentage increases significantly when you consider those with five or fewer appearances in THE PLAYERS (69%) and three or fewer appearances (75%). Last year's Nationwide Tour leading money winner **Richard Johnson** of Wales, **Matt Jones** of Australia and **Nicholas Thompson** of Coral Springs, FL represent the 2007 Nationwide Tour class of "The 25" top money winners who graduated to the PGA TOUR this year.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT – Last week the Nationwide Tour tackled the challenge of the longest course in PGA TOUR history, the 7,781-yard Kinderlou Forest Golf Club in Valdosta, GA. This week the players on the Nationwide Tour find the tables totally reversed. At 6,783 yards, host Hardscrabble Country Club in Fort Smith, AR is 998 yards shorter than Kinderlou Forest. Long-iron play will be less in demand with the short irons getting a lot more of a workout. Hardscrabble was the second shortest course on the Nationwide Tour last year (No. 1 – 6,720-yard Irondequoit Country Club in Rochester, NY / Xerox Classic). The course, designed by Perry Maxwell of Prairie Dunes (KS) and Southern Hills (OK) fame, opened in 1927. It is one of three par-70 courses on Tour this year.

CANADIANS NO. 2 TO AUSSIES IN WINS – Guelph, Ontario's **Bryan DeCorso** became the 11th Canadian to win on the Nationwide Tour when he captured the South Georgia Classic on Sunday. Canadians have won a total of 17 times on the Nationwide Tour, second only to Australia's 36 wins among the international contingent.

MORE ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT – With Canada's victory on Sunday and Australia's five visits to the winner's circle this year, international members of the Nationwide Tour have now won six of the first nine events. Non-U.S. born players hold down the top five spots on the money list (1-**Jarrold Lyle**/Australia, 2-**Greg Chalmers**/Australia, 3-**Ewan Porter**/Australia, 4-**Bryan DeCorso**/Canada and 5-**Greg Owen**/England, the only non-winner in the group). Americans retain four of the next five spots to round out the top 10.

PLAYING WITH "THE GREAT ONE" – Like many Canadians, **Bryan DeCorso** grew up a **Wayne Gretzky** fan. In June he hopes to meet "The Great One" and maybe even play with him. DeCorso shared the following comments about his hero and playing in the Ford Wayne Gretzky Classic near Georgian Bay, Ontario, June 23-29. "Next to winning the Canadian Open, the Ford Wayne Gretzky Classic is the next tournament that I would say I want to win this season.....Wayne Gretzky is an idol of mine. Who is bigger than Wayne Gretzky? He is *the* sports legend in Canada and the fact that he is involved with the Nationwide Tour is great for this Tour.....Just to be able to meet him will be so cool. I'd be glad to play in his group if he has an opening."

BRYCE MOLDER HEADS HOME WITH T2 FINISH UNDER HIS BELT – On Sunday in Valdosta, Arkansas native **Bryce Molder** posted his best finish (T2) in a TOUR-sanctioned event since winning the 2006 Nationwide Tour Miccosukee Championship. The four-time, first-team Georgia Tech All-American from Harrison, AR is now 22nd on the Nationwide Tour money list having made a big jump from 94th last week. Molder played on the PGA TOUR last year earning \$257,593 but fell short of retaining his card.

GREG OWEN / DESTINED TO WIN SOON – If stats are any barometer, England's **Greg Owen** will win his first Nationwide Tour event very soon. In five starts this year, the 36-year-old Englishman has finished second twice (once via playoff), T3, T17 and T40. Seeking to return to the PGA TOUR where he earned more than \$3 million from 2005 through 2007, Owen leads the Nationwide Tour in Scoring Average (70.20), Birdie Average (4.2) and All-Around Ranking (92). He is also inside the top 10 in four other key categories: 3rd – Total Driving (45), 4th – Putting Average (1.736), 4th – Driving Distance (308 yards), 7th – Greens-In-Regulation (71.67%). At No. 5 on the money list, he is the only player among the top 8 who doesn't have a win this year.

THE “CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?” DEPARTMENT – In case you missed it, **Bob May** recorded what may be the longest hole-in-one on a par three in PGA TOUR history last week at the South Georgia Classic when he aced the 251-yard 15th hole. Equally impressive was his club selection – a 3-iron! While no official TOUR records exist for longest hole-in-one, Chip Beck knocked the ball in the hole from 315 yards on a par 4 in the 2003 Cox Classic.

NEXT WEEK – The Nationwide Tour will be in South Carolina next week (May 12-18) for the BMW Charity Pro-Am featuring its celebrity format. Among the many celebrities scheduled to be there are **Wayne Gretzky, Joe Pesci, Dennis Quaid** and **Kurt Russell**. The popular event that raised more than \$2 million for charity last year will be played at three courses – Thornblade Club (Greer, SC), The Carolina Country Club (Spartanburg, SC) and Bright’s Creek Golf Club (Mill Spring, NC).

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