

## 51st PGA Seniors Championship

The Stoke By Nayland Club, Suffolk

England



06 Sep 2007 - 09 Sep 2007

**Mason and Heuchan inseparable at The PGA Seniors**

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Carl Mason  
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A birdie on the last hole ensured Canada's Bruce Heuchan co-leads with England's Carl Mason at the PGA Seniors Championship on ten under par 134. The duo hold a one stroke advantage over Argentina's Luis Carbonetti and Italy's Costantino Rocca at The Stoke-by-Nayland Club.

Mason and Heuchan, the overnight leaders, both fired second consecutive five under par rounds of 67 to top the leaderboard, while Carbonetti and Rocca each shot 66 to present themselves as the nearest challengers.

South Africa's John Bland also fired a 66 to put himself firmly in contention one shot further back on eight under par 136. The 61 year old South African fired seven birdies and dropped just one shot, while Scotland's Ross Drummond shot a 67 to also finish on 136 after 36 holes of the 72 hole tournament.

The cut fell on two over par 146. The top 60 players plus ties progressed to the weekend action over the Gainsborough Course – and defending champion, Scotland's Sam Torrance, is among them, on 144 level par.

Early 9.20am starter Mason posted the target Heuchan, off at 1.40pm said he ignored before going out to play. He said: "I didn't really look at that – I just concentrated on my own game and playing each shot right. I wasn't thinking 'I must get to ten under.'"

"Some people are born with focus and don't get excited or carried away. It's about concentration, which is why I'm pleased to have done that and put two good rounds together. But it's only two rounds. There's another 36 holes to go, but I'm looking forward to going out with Carl in the final group. He's been playing great all season."

On a day of low scores in Suffolk, Rocca, who started out at 1.10pm knowing Mason's target, matched Carbonetti with a superb 66 of his own that included six birdies and no dropped shots. He got up and down from the greenside bunker on the 18th to do so, holing a seven foot par putt.

He said: "I am very happy with my game. I left four or five putts short, but also holed some good ones. Perfecto! I hit the ball straight and made no mistakes. If I keep playing like this, I am in with a chance of course."

Mason, who defeated Rocca in a play-off for the European Senior Masters at Woburn Golf Club last weekend, went out in 33 after birdies at the second, third and seventh holes.

He missed good chances on eight and nine, but recorded further birdies on the 415-yard par four 13th and 17th, and got up and down at the last after his five iron approach just ran through the back of the green, to preserve his bogey-free round.

The current European Seniors Tour Order of Merit leader won the PGA Seniors Championship in 2004, and is keen to claim another of the title he considers to be one of the most prestigious in the calendar.

Mason said: "I'm very pleased – I putted well again and made a few good saves too when I needed to. The course is playing tricky because it's hard and bouncy, so you have to be hitting the ball straight. Luckily, I am at the moment, although you're going to find a few tricky positions. You just hope they aren't going to be too troublesome. Thankfully, they haven't been when I've found a few."

Mason added: "I'm not sure if I can predict the winning score, maybe 12 to 15 under. There is more pressure, going out as leader, but you just have to trust yourself and your swing and keep doing the things you have done in the past when you're in that position."

"I'm there to be shot at, but there's pressure on the other players to catch me, and it's a course you have to think your way around and can't really be aggressive on the greens, because they're really quick."

Torrance was made to sweat on whether he was going to make the cut after a bad front nine. Having started the day two under par, a double bogey at the fourth hole and two more dropped shots at holes seven and eight, sent him out in 40.

However, coming home, the 2002 European Ryder Cup Captain birdied the par five 14th, and also the 16th hole, to shoot a two over par 74.

He said: "I got off to a bad start and it continued through the front nine. I pulled my drive one the fourth into the trees and it sent me 30 yards left. It's annoying that I had that bad front nine, especially when I'm defending and was hoping to make it three in a row, because that score puts me out of contention. But I played beautifully on the back nine and that's the sort of golf I'll be aiming to repeat this weekend."

Runner-up to Torrance last year, Luis Carbonetti loves James Bond films – and proved he had a ‘Goldeneye’ of his own on the greens. He posted eight birdies, including a four-in-a-row stretch from holes 13-16, and dropped just two shots.

He said: “I came close last year, so maybe this is my year. We shall see. I putted very well and I like these greens. It’s nice for me. I think there will be a lot of good scores and maybe I will be leading or just one or two behind, which I am happy with.”

England’s Maurice Bembridge was delighted with his score of 69, which included four birdies. “It’s my best round of the year and I’m pleased I’m here for the weekend. Last year I went home early. My birdie putt on 17 was going like an express train, but I putted well and chipped well when I needed to.”

Scotland’s Martin Gray, three over at the start of the day, shot a 71 that included four birdies to make the cut on two over par 146. He said: “I got it round but didn’t really make any putts. I holed about two I was happy with, but at least I’m here for the weekend.”

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