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Berenberg Bank Masters:

Boonchu does it again at the Berenberg Bank Masters



GEORGE, 28 March 2010

The seemingly unstoppable Boonchu Ruangkit was again in a league of his own when he rallied for his third title in three straight weeks at the Berenberg Bank Masters at The Links at Fancourt.

Ruangkit set the record for the quickest three consecutive wins in his seventh European Senior Tour start, and matched the 1997 record for three consecutive victories held by Tommy Horton. This just 14 days after his 21 under par victory at the Thailand Senior Masters, where he set a new lowest 54-hole total record in European Senior Tour history, and bettered Horton's previous biggest winning margin of nine shots to 11 strokes.

On a clam day on The Links, Ruangkit overturned a three-shot deficit at the start of the final round with smart decisions and nearly flawless golf to post a four-under-par 68. His winning score of 216 handed the 53-year-old a three-shot victory over South Africa's Bobby Lincoln and Scotsman Sam Torrance. Lincoln led the South African challenge with his closing 70 to finish alongside Torrance, who struggled to a 75, on level par for the tournament.

Ruangkit was virtually an unknown in world golf at the start of this year, but he is now very much the new force in senior golf. "I think we have a new rival on the scene and we will have our work cut if he continues to play like this," said Torrance, who is defending his Order of Merit title this season.

Ruangkit came to Fancourt in confident mood, but admits The Links made him work hard for his victory. "This one was the hardest," he said of a tournament highlighted by the gusting winds of the second round. Ruangkit posted a 78 in that second round.

On the final day, he went out with a single birdie amidst a run of pars. "I dropped on the 10th and made birdie on 11. Then I made birdies on 13, 14 and 15, but even then I didn't think about winning," he said. "All I could think was to keep the ball in the fairway all the time, because this course is very, very hard. I don't know courses like this and it didn't suit my game. After the second round, I didn't give myself a chance.

"If the weather was the same, maybe I would have gone home already," joked Ruangkit, who said it was a great honour to win in South Africa. "I have met Gary Player and played with him all over the world, but it is an honour for me to win at this course that he designed. I had to fight very hard for this victory, but now I am very happy. And perhaps after playing in this bad weather, I will do better in England the rest of the season." Lincoln, who began the final round five off the pace after rounds of 74 and 75, birdied the seventh but dropped at the ninth and 10th. The 57-year-old said a birdie at the 13th got him going coming down the home stretch.

"I played nice all week but I made some very dubious decisions – wrong clubs, wrong spots to hit to," said Lincoln, who birdied the 15th and 16th and holed a tricky 20-footer for birdie at the 18th for his 70. "That last birdie was an important one; it was for a lot of money," said the 2008 Jersey Seniors Classic winner. "If I can keep on striking it like this, I could definitely win again this year."

Torrance, the joint overnight leader with Angel Franco of Paraguay at two under, slipped to two over after the first five holes, but recovered well from the disastrous start to finish with a 75. "I had such a horrific start. I dropped four shots in three holes, but I dug in and the birdies came at the 12th and 13th.

“It was difficult because Boonchu went crazy on the back nine. He’s some player; he is simply fantastic.”

Final result from the Berenberg Bank Masters played on the par-73 Links Golf Course at Fancourt in George, South Africa on Sunday, 28 March 2010. All competitors RSA unless otherwise stated:

- 216 Boonchu Ruangkit THA 69 78 69
- 219 Bobby Lincoln 74 75 70; Sam Torrance SCO 72 72 75
- 221 Roger Chapman ENG 74 72 75; Angel Franco PAR 72 72 77
- 223 Bob Cameron ENG 74 78 71
- 224 Mike Clayton AUS 76 75 73; Ross Drummond SCO 73 77 74
- 225 Giuseppe Cali ITA 71 77 77; Robbie Stewart 72 79 74
- 226 Mike Harwood AUS 72 77 77; Ian Woosnam WAL 74 78 74
- 227 Nick Job Eng 76 81 70; David Merriman AUS 71 81 75; Ian Mosey ENG 74 79 74; Juan Quiros ESP 75 76 76; Bertus Smit 74 74 79
- 228 Jerry Bruner USA 70 83 75; Horacio Carbonetti ARG 74 81 73
- 229 Torsten Gideon GER 72 82 75; Martin Poxton ENG 78 76 75; Glenn Ralph ENG 78 81 70; Costantino Rocco ITA 76 81 72; DJ Russell ENG 72 83 74; Chris Williams 72 80 77
- 230 Stephen Bennett ENG 74 81 75; John Chillas SCO 76 81 73; Martin Gray SCO 73 81 76; Denis O’Sullivan IRE 78 79 73
- 231 Jimmy Heggarty NIR 74 79 78; Domingo Hospital ESP 78 76 77; Peter Mitchell ENG 80 79 72; Jim ENG 76 80 75; Manas Saengsui THA 73 79 79; Steve van Vuuren 71 83 77
- 232 Marc Farry FRA 72 85 75; Manuel Pinero ESP 74 78 80; Greg Towne USA 72 82 78
- 233 Graham Banister AUS 78 82 73; Doug Johnson USA 78 83 72; Tony Johnstone ZIM 77 84 72; John Mashego 76 82 75; Kevin Spurgeon ENG 73 80 80; Mike Williams ZIM 74 84 75
- 234 Adan Sowa ARG 83 78 73
- 235 Jamnian Chitprasong THA 78 83 74; Seiji Ebihara JPN 74 86 75
- 236 Luis Carbonetti ARG 78 85 73; Des Smyth IRE 77 81 78
- 238 Hugh Baiocchi 81 80 77; Antonio Garrido ESP 79 76 83
- 239 Delroy Cambridge JAM 78 79 82
- 240 Gordon J Johnsson SWE 76 82 82; Pete Oakley USA 73 86 81
- 241 Andrew Murray ENG 77 81 83; Gary Player 77 85 79
- 242 John Bland 75 89 78; Gavan Levenson 80 82 80; Emilio Rodriguez ESP 80 81 81
- 243 Bill Longmuir SCO 72 87 84
- 244 Simon Hobday 76 85 83; Mike Miller SCO 78 83 83
- 245 Neville Clarke 82 89 74; Fraser Mann SCO 76 84 85; José Rivero ESP 83 82 80
- 246 Bob Boyd USA 88 85 73; Jeff Hawkes 80 86 80
- 248 John Fourie 81 89 78; Solly Mogare 80 91 77; Ian Palmer 80 88 80
- 251 Maurice Bembridge ENG 82 84 85; Tommy Horton ENG 81 86 84; VincentTshabalala 83 87 81
- 257 Jannie Ackerman 83 90 84
- 259 Bill Hardwick CAN 84 87 88
- 261 Trevor Fisher Snr 94 90 77 RTD, Theo Manyama 85 92; Allan Henning 80; Carl Mason ENG 73