

Kaymer equals 20-year record set by the Shark

Great Scott news does the rounds



Martin Kaymer watches his shot from the seventh tee during the second round of The Players Championship golf tournament at TPC Sawgrass, in Florida, yesterday, and with a one-stroke lead, the German says his game is "coming together nicely"

Picture: GERALD HERBERT

By DOUG FERGUSON
GOLF

MARTIN Kaymer followed up his course-record first round by shooting a three-under 69 yesterday to hold a one-stroke lead at The Players Championship going into the weekend.

Kaymer's lead was eroded by Jordan Spieth, who fired a 66 in his first big tournament since tying for second place at the Masters.

Kaymer capped off his 69 with a pitching wedge to within four feet of the hole on the 17th's island green.

"Everything is coming together nicely," Kaymer said.

The 29-year-old German was at 12-under 132. That matched the best 36-hole score on the Stadium Course at the TPC Sawgrass in 20 years, dating to Greg Norman's record-setting performance.

Adam Scott, in his first tournament as a married man, kept alive his hopes of going to No.1 in the world this week with three birdies in his last four holes for a 67.

That was a 10-shot improvement from Thursday and enabled him to make the cut

on the number at even-par 144. Rory McIlroy shot 42 on the front nine and appeared headed home early until making birdie on the 18th hole to salvage a 74 to make the cut.

Phil Mickelson missed his birdie attempt on the 18th and had a 70 to miss the cut by one. Mickelson also went home early at the Masters.

"I don't feel bad about the game," Mickelson said. "But mentally, I'm just really soft right now."

Kaymer is winless dating to the HSBC Champions in Shanghai at the end of 2011, so

he did not let his expectations get too high after shooting a 63 in the first round.

Spieth hit his stride in the middle of the back nine with a 6-iron on the par-three 13th that rode the ridge down to about four feet, and a 6-iron from 184 yards on the 14th to three feet.

Spieth held a two-shot lead with 11 holes to play at the Masters and his game looks every bit as solid at Sawgrass, a course he had only seen while playing a junior event. He finished second in that one, too.

And that's what keeps him

going. Asked if he was getting bored being in contention so much, he smiled and said, "No, because I haven't won one."

"You should probably have to win every time in order for it to get boring – but not even Tiger gets bored."

Russell Henley didn't make a par over his last six holes – three bogeys, three birdies – for a 71 and was in third place at eight-under 136. Sergio Garcia (71), US Open champion Justin Rose (71), Gary Woodland (71), Lee Westwood (71) and Jim Furyk (68) were six shots behind.

ADAM Scott produced a 10-shot turnaround to make the cut on the number and keep his chase for world No.1 alive – then dropped a wedding bombshell at the US PGA Players Championship.

After a terrible five-over 77 on day one, the world No.2 fired a five-under 67, making birdie on three of his last four holes to get to even-par and make the weekend.

While the fightback was impressive, it was lost among the revelation he had married long-time girlfriend Marie Kojzar in a surprise and secret small Bahamas ceremony on April 17, the Thursday after this year's Masters.

"It's official. I am a settled down man and very happy," Scott said.

"We just decided to get on with it, we've known each other long enough, let's go and jump right in the deep end."

"It was just our family and a few friends and obviously there are a lot of people we would have liked to have had there who weren't but we decided to have a very low-key affair."

Scott was still a distant 12 shots off the lead held by German Martin Kaymer, who backed up his course-record 63 with a solid three-under 69 to be 12-under, but the Australian needs only to finish in the top 16 to have a chance at taking over as world No.1.

He is just five shots back of those in that position. "I'll just grind no matter what. Two rounds like today could go a very long way," Scott said.

American star 20-year-old Jordan Spieth moved into outright second just a shot behind Kaymer after a 66 while countryman Russell Henley (71) is third at eight-under.

John Senden (69), Matt Jones (69) and Geoff Ogilvy (70) are the leading Australians at five-under par, good enough for a tie for ninth.

Ogilvy moved as high as second at one-point in the round before three late bogies dropped him back.

"It's a four-round tournament, not a two-round tournament but I would have preferred to finish a little better," Ogilvy said.

Manchester City draw line in the sand with EPL title at stake

MANCHESTER City will hope to avoid the nerve-shredding drama of the 2011-12 season's final day when they host West Ham United in their Premier League title decider tonight.

Two years ago, City needed to match Manchester United's result to take the title on the last day and only prevailed after Sergio Aguero scored a heart-stopping injury-time winner at home to Queens Park Rangers.

This time around the scenario is more straightforward, as although City lead second-place Liverpool by only two points, their superior goal difference means that a draw

against West Ham will suffice. City closed to within touching distance of a second title in three years by overwhelming Aston Villa 4-0 on Wednesday, but manager Manuel Pellegrini has warned his side that the job is not finished yet.

"It is important to be calm ahead of this game," said the Chilean, who has already led City to glory in the League Cup. Liverpool's title challenge was compromised by a 2-0 loss at home to Chelsea followed by a calamitous 3-3 draw at Crystal Palace on Monday, in which they let a 3-0 lead slip in the last 11 minutes.

However, if Liverpool win at home to Newcastle United

EPL WINDING UP

Round 38 - Today (11.30pm)

Cardiff v Chelsea
Fulham v Crystal Palace
Hull v Everton
Liverpool v Newcastle
Manchester City v West Ham
Norwich v Arsenal
Southampton v Manchester United
Sunderland v Swansea
Tottenham v Aston Villa
WBA v Stoke

and West Ham pull off a shock victory at the Etihad Stadium, the Merseyside club will secure their first English top-flight

title since 1990. "In terms of Sunday, all we can do is win our own game, and send the supporters away happy," said Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers.

"They have been brilliant for us this year."

While City's rout of Villa took them to 100 league goals for the campaign, Liverpool are on 99.

Meanwhile, Liverpool's top scorer Luis Suarez, who has netted 31 times this season, needs to score just one more goal to claim the record for goals in a 38-game Premier League season outright.

With the four Champions League qualifying places al-

GOOD AND BAD

Manchester City	83
Liverpool	81
Chelsea	79
Arsenal	76
Everton	69
Tottenham	66
Manchester United	63
West Bromwich Albion	36
Norwich	33
Fulham	31
Cardiff	30

ready secured by City, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal, the only other issue to be decided at the top of the table concerns

the Europa League slots. Fifth-place Everton, who visit FA Cup finalists Hull City, have already secured one of the two Europa League berths and Tottenham Hotspur can pip Manchester United to the second if they avoid defeat at home to Villa.

United visit Southampton, where interim manager Ryan Giggs will take charge of the defending champions for the final time.

Norwich City are already certain to join Fulham and Cardiff City in succumbing to relegation as they trail fourth-bottom West Bromwich Albion by three points with a vastly inferior goal difference.