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## Californian Kenny Pigman grabs 54-hole lead in National Car Rental Assistant PGA Professional Championship

By Bob Denney  
PGA of America

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (Nov. 17, 2018) - If he wasn't carrying golf clubs, it isn't a stretch to imagine Kenny Pigman of Norco, California, as a stand-in for the next open seat in the World Series of Poker.

A man of no wasted words and sunglasses shielding any emotion, Pigman found the right "hand" on the Wanamaker Course Saturday to grab the 54-hole lead in the 42nd National Car Rental Assistant PGA Professional Championship at PGA Golf Club.

Making his fourth trip to the national championship, the 30-year-old PGA Assistant Professional at Goose Creek Golf Club in Mira Loma, California, collected four birdies, a bogey and closed by holing a six-foot par-saving putt on No. 18. His 3-under-par 69 boosted him to 9-under-par and a 207 total.

Pigman owns a two-stroke cushion over playing partner and 36-hole leader Steven Delmar of Rockville, Maryland, who was cruising before finishing 4-over-par on the final eight holes. His 73 left him alone in second at 209.

Chris French of Loves Park, Illinois (69) and Scott Cherry of Rancho Mirage, California, (70), were three strokes back at 210. Former Champion Andy Mickelson of Romeoville, Illinois (70) led a five-player group at 211.

Collecting birdies on Nos. 1, 6, 7, and 13, made it not that bad of a day for Pigman, who was runner-up in 2014. But, he's after a bigger prize heading into Sunday's final round.

"I really didn't do anything special," he said. "I had a lot of good looks (for birdie), but didn't make anything. The par-save on 18 was really the only one I made."

“The thing that gets me are the Bermuda greens. I’m not used to that in California. We have Poa (annua) and bent, and Bermuda in the desert.”

Delmar, a PGA Associate at Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase, Maryland, was frustrated with his game in 2017 and took a six-month break from competition. This week, he’s appeared in rhythm.

He sped to 11-under-par through 10 holes, and was on the verge of separating himself from the field. But his momentum shut down with a double bogey at the par-3 11th hole after a 4-iron tee shot that appeared zeroing in on the flagstick.

“It was probably the best shot I hit all day, and it hit just beyond the flag and landed over the green and rolled into the water,” said Delmar. “I hit it so well, I wasn’t really upset with that. A good shot, but a bad result.

“Coming in, I missed a tap-in par at 12, didn’t take time to mark it. I hit a bad drive left into the water on 16 (a par-5) and made bogey. I look back and I hung in there nice. I got it up and down for par on No. 17, and missed birdie after a nice approach on 18, and a par on that hole is always good.”

Delmar is making his third Championship appearance, and said it was about this time a year ago that he pulled his clubs out of mothballs.

“The first year that I played down here was rough,” said Delmar. “I feel pretty comfortable here now.”

Dan Olsen of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, 51, who tied for fifth on Oct. 28 at PGA Golf Club in the Senior PGA Professional Championship, turned in the day’s low round of 66. He is tied for 13th and seven shots back at 214.

This week’s champion, if eligible, will earn a berth in the 2019 PGA Professional Championship, which is slated for April 28-May 1 at Belfair in Bluffton, South Carolina. The winner will also receive \$12,000 of the \$150,000 purse.

The top-four finishers, if eligible, will earn a berth in next year’s National Car Rental Assistant PGA Professional Championship, to be held November 14-17 at PGA Golf Club.

*The National Car Rental Assistant PGA Professional Championship is supported by Srixon | Cleveland Golf | XXIO, GolfAdvisor.com and John Deere.*

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