

Time Well Spent – after a month off, Larry Mize responds with his best finish of the year

By Ryan Herrington

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# PGA TOUR

BY RYAN HERRINGTON

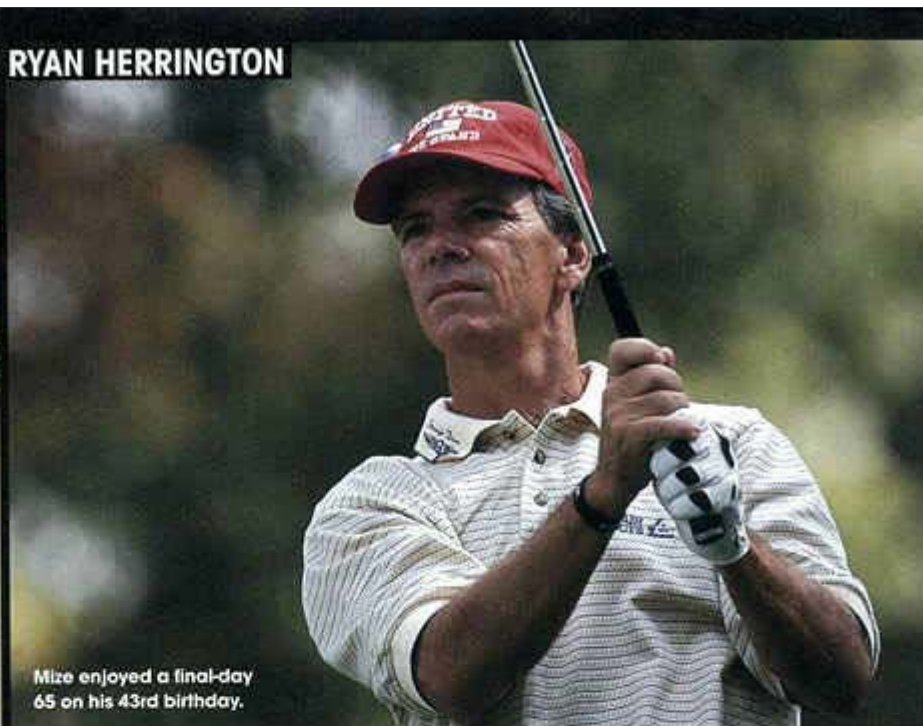


Arnold Palmer

## THEFRINGE...

The Marconi Pennsylvania Classic will continue to alternate yearly between eastern and western sites through 2003, but if **ARNOLD PALMER** has his way, the tournament will stay at Laurel Valley GC, 40 miles outside Pittsburgh, from there after. "I love Philadelphia, but if I can get [the event] settled here, I'm going to do that," said Palmer, instrumental in getting the event to come to his home state in the first place. PGA Tour commissioner **TIM FINCHEM**, however, noted the tour still likes the concept of rotating between sites. ... **VIJAY SINGH** missed the cut despite shooting a one-over 145 at Laurel Valley. Coupled with his MC at the Bell Canadian Open, it's the first time he didn't play on the weekend in consecutive events since the 1995 Mosters and MCI Heritage Classic. ... After going six over through his first 14 holes, **KEVIN SUTHERLAND** ran off 17 birdies (and one bogey) in his next 36 holes. He would finish alone in fourth place at 15-under 273. ... Air Canada announced it will end its sponsorship of the Air Canada Championship following next year's event. The PGA Tour has had an event in the Vancouver area since the 1996 season.

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Mize enjoyed a final-day 65 on his 43rd birthday.

## MARCONI PENNSYLVANIA CLASSIC

# Time well spent

After a month off, Larry Mize responds with his best finish of the year

HE is known by peers on the PGA Tour as a man of faith. Perhaps it's not surprising then that Larry Mize, last a pupil at tour Q School in 1981, didn't send in an entry form for this fall's event. "The philosophy I'm taking," said the 20-year tour veteran, who spent the last month on the lesson tee gearing up for a fall finish, "is believing in myself and believing I'm going to make the top 125."

Others looking at the former Masters champion's play might not have been so optimistic. In his 19 starts in 2001 prior to last week's Marconi Pennsylvania Classic, Mize had made just nine cuts, earned a mere \$85,084 and sat 199th on the money list. Additionally, having started the year 42nd on the career money list—players in the top 50 can take a one-time, one-year exemption—he had fallen to 52nd, closing that avenue of access in 2002.

After his performance at Laurel Valley GC in Ligonier, Pa., it would have been best to bet with Mize, who shot a 65 on his 43rd birthday to finish tied for second with Rocco Mediate. In the process, the Columbus, Ga., native earned \$290,400, the largest paycheck of his career, and jumped to 111th on the money list.

"I guess I could be happier if I won," said Mize, whose fist pump on the 18th hole, where he made an 18-foot birdie putt to get to 16-under 272, suggested otherwise. "But to shoot a 65 when I needed to is very satisfying."

Mize attributes his season-long slump to swing flaws, which he addressed during his recent hiatus with Kip Puterbaugh, an instructor at Avia Golf Academy in Carlsbad, Calif., and whose most famous pupil is Bill Murray. "I'd gotten quick at the top of the backswing," Mize said. "[Kip] helped my transition, getting more aggressive through the ball."

Mize carded seven birdies in the first 13 holes at Laurel Valley to cut eventual champ Robert Allenby's lead to three. As critical as the birdies were par saves from bunkers on Nos. 8 and 14, which kept the momentum until a bogey on the 17th.

Despite \$375,484 in season earnings, Mize likely will need another \$40,000 to guarantee his card, less than the \$66,000 he lost when Mediate made his birdie putt on 18 Sunday for a share of second.

"I just want to keep this going," Mize said. "If I can start playing more aggressively, I think things will work themselves out."

MIKE COHEN/LARRY MIZE/PGA