

A Second Chance at a Championship

New York's Scott Berliner looking for redemption at the 37th National Car Rental PGA Assistant Championship

By Randy Stutzman

New York's Scott Berliner is looking for a bit of redemption in this year's National Car Rental PGA Assistant Championship presented by Cobra Puma Golf on Nov. 1–4, at PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, Fla. He held at least a share of the lead after each of the first three rounds of the 2011 edition of the Championship.

"I gave myself a bunch of opportunities the first three days and took advantage," says Berliner. "I played extremely well in the opening round and really held it together the next two days."

The PGA assistant professional at Normanside Country Club in Delmar, N.Y., struggled on his front nine on the final day, before bouncing back on the final nine holes with birdies on 15 and 16. He had a chance to force a playoff with eventual winner and two-time defending champion Frank Bensel of Purchase, N.Y., but his six-foot birdie putt on the final hole came up just short.

"I think I came out too aggressive in the final round and I let it kind of slip away," says Berliner. "But I was able to get back into it and gave myself a chance. No. 18 on the Wanamaker Course seems to be my nemesis and I missed the putt on that hole to get into a playoff."

The 37-year-old, who finished in a tie for 14th in

Scott Berliner comes to PGA Golf Club with a goal of bouncing back from last year's tough finish.



2012 National Car Rental PGA Assistant Championship presented by Cobra Puma Golf



PGA
NATIONAL CAR RENTAL
ASSISTANT CHAMPIONSHIP



presented by
 COBRA PUMA GOLF

When: Nov. 1–4

Where: PGA Golf Club (Wanamaker Course), Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Defending Champion: Frank Bensel, Purchase, N.Y.

Prize money and purse/method of play: A purse of \$100,000 will be distributed to the 2012 field of 126 competitors. The Champion will receive \$9,000. Following the first 36 holes, the field will be reduced to the lowest 70 scorers and ties. In the event of a tie for first place after 72 holes, there will be a hole-by-hole playoff.

the 2010 PGA Assistant Championship, has been looking forward to this event all year.

"I have been playing well this summer and am happy with where my game is," says Berliner. "I am really familiar with the golf course and I just want to get out there, play well again and see what happens."

Bensel, the PGA assistant professional at Century Country Club in Purchase, N.Y., will look to become just the second three-time winner of the Championship. Kyle Flinton of Edmond, Okla., won the event in 2002, '03 and '05.

Since 1996, PGA assistant professionals and apprentices have come to PGA Golf Club for this National Championship. The 2012 field will feature the top-four finishers from last year's Championship as well as 122 players who advanced through their PGA Section Championships.

Also at stake is a spot in the 46th PGA Professional National Championship, June 23–26, 2013 at Sunriver (Ore.) Resort, provided the Champion meets eligibility requirements.

Following the first 36 holes of play, the field for the final two rounds will be reduced to the low 70 scorers and ties. The winner of the 2012 Championship will collect \$9,000 of the \$100,000 purse.

This year, National Car Rental became the title sponsor of the Championship.

For nearly 40 years, the National Car Rental PGA Assistant Championship presented by Cobra Puma Golf has produced outstanding PGA Professionals who have gone onto successful careers in teaching and administering the game, as well as competing at the highest level.

Past competitors or champions include: Loren Roberts (Champion, 1979); Fred Funk (Champion, 1984); Rich Beem (third, 1998); Jeff Freeman (T-7, 1998); Robert Thompson (Champion, 1986); and Tim Thelen (Champion, 2009). ■

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