

# Inside **G**olf

BY CB STAFF

## Puerto Ricans in action

### Rodolfo Gonzalez triumphs at American Express Puerto Rico Open

**I**n a thrilling last-hole shoot-out, Rodolfo Gonzalez became the new champion of Puerto Rico, his closing sand-save birdie good for a one-stroke margin over David Morland IV and Eduardo Argiro.

Overnight leader Mike SanFilippo, who incurred a two-stroke penalty for inadvertently practicing before his round in an area designated as golf course, finished these two strokes behind, ending a day he would probably prefer to forget with a bogey six in solo-fourth place.

Gonzalez mastered the blustery conditions with a 2-under par 70, four birdies two bogeys, for a four-day total of 282, 6-under par. Remarkably, Gonzalez, the current Argentine Open champion, made no eagles at all during the tournament, but his sterling short game was undeniable and his long-game rhythm truly majestic.

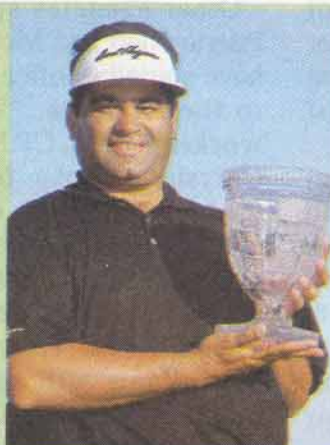
"I played the last five holes with all my heart," he said. "I knew it would be hard to get out of the clutch, but I forced my way out."

As the final group played the 17th, there were four tied at 5-under. Eduardo Argiro was one of these, but he was already safely in the clubhouse. Moreland was the first to open the door, chipping long from below the green and missing from five feet to drop one shot.

On the 16th tee, Morland held the outright lead, but he found water from the tee then missed a short slider to concede a share of the lead to SanFilippo and Gonzalez.

There, SanFilippo also blundered, missing from less than three feet to grab solo leadership. SanFilippo made a fine long two-putt from the back-left fringe at the 17th, where Gonzalez, who had also missed the green, chipped to inches from the cup—the scene all set for who could best sprint the 18th, or was this destined to become a four-man playoff?

"My bread-and-butter game is around the greens," the newly crowned champion said, "and I felt pretty confident about that long bunker shot on the 18th. I



Argentine Rodolfo Gonzalez, 38, won his first victory at the American Express Tour de las Americas and took home a \$20,000 check.

thought I could lay the ball anywhere within two meters; fortunately, I got it a bit closer, and a one-meter putt to win is a lot nearer than two!"

Morland birdied to regain a slice of second spot, while SanFilippo's day finished as tragically as it had started, fluffing his first chip and sending the next well past the hole. "That wasn't my best day," said the man who had never been out of the lead for the first three days. Once again, Argiro was a bridesmaid, his bogey at the 17th a very costly mistake. "Two three-putts today, otherwise a very good round," he said. "I completely misjudged the first putt on 17, and for that I paid the price. You just can't afford to make any mistakes when you're in position."

Argiro can take some comfort from Gonzalez's recent winning streak. The burly Argentine was a runner-up 22 times before winning his first event.

Mauricio Molina birdied the final three holes for a sixth-place share with compatriots Miguel Guzman and Miguel Rodriguez Nicora. "I could have kicked the ball better than I putted today," said Guzman. ■

**P**uerto Rico's Wilfredo Morales and Yoyo Rosario, golfing friends from the Dorado area, were the two locals to make the cut after the second round of the American Express Puerto Rico Open. Yoyo closed the event with a 69, which moved him up to a tie in the 23rd position out of 51 players who made the cut. Wilfredo was on the leaderboard at all times during the final round on Sunday, when he began play with a 2-under total.

Wilfredo opened the round with a birdie on the first hole to move to 3-under. A bogey on Hole 4 and birdies on 6 & 8 put him at 4-under



Wilfredo Morales

for the tournament and in third place.

He encountered problems on 15 when he hit his approach shot into the left hazard, which caused him a double bogey. A birdie on 16 and a bogey on 17 left him at 2-under par for the event and tied for sixth place. ■

#### American Express Puerto Rico Open Leaderboard

		Rd. 1	Rd. 2	Rd. 3	Rd. 4	Total
1	Rodolfo Gonzalez ARG	71	72	69	70	282 (-6)
2	Eduardo Argiro ARG	74	68	72	69	283 (-5)
2	David Morland IV CAN	74	68	68	73	283 (-5)
4	Mike SanFilippo USA	67	72	70	75	284 (-4)
5	Mauricio Molina ARG	70	71	75	69	285 (-3)
6	Miguel Rodriguez ARG	72	70	73	71	286 (-2)
6	Miguel Guzman ARG	75	68	71	72	286 (-2)
6	Wilfredo Morales PR	72	71	71	72	286 (-2)
9	Andres Romero ARG	76	67	73	71	287 (-1)
10	Miguel Fernandez ARG	74	73	71	70	288 (par)

Source: [www.tourdelasamericas.com](http://www.tourdelasamericas.com)