

Rodriguez, Gilbert Lead Golf by 2 Shots With 64's

By LINCOLN A. WERDEN

Special to The New York Times

ORLANDO, March 1—Juan (Chi Chi) Rodriguez, whose first golf clubs were cut from guava trees, and Gibby Gilbert, who has overcome a fear of missing four-foot putts, scored 64's in the \$150,000 Florida Citrus open tournament today.

They were eight under par over the Rio Pinar County Club course and shared a two-stroke lead. Using only 27 putts each, they had eight birdies apiece and not a single bogey.

Trailing at 66 were Bob Murphy, who developed his golf on Florida courses; Brian Allin, who served in Vietnam as an Army officer, and a 23-year-old rookie, Tom Kite of Austin, Tex.

Sub-par rounds predominated over the flat, 6,928-yard course, with 26 players being under 70. Peter Oosterhuis, representing the Fiji Islands and a British Ryder Cup player, was at 69. Arnold Palmer, discarding eyeglasses for a new pair of contact lenses, was at 70 with Sam Snead, the 60-year-old campaigner. Lee Trevino, winner last Sunday of the Jackie Gleason Inverrary tournament, was at 71.

"I was half asleep when I went off," commented Trevino, who had an 8:10 A.M. starting time, "and I didn't wake up until the back nine." Trevino had a 33 on the incoming half.

However, the first to tee off at 7:30 A.M. in the field of 147 was Bobby Cole of South Africa, who had an exasperating experience. Cole and Bob Charles of New Zealand are here for their first 1973 American tournament. Cole thought he would be late for his starting assignment and in the rush

couldn't find his shoes. He dashed into the shop and bought a new pair. Then after he played two holes he discovered he had an extra No. 3 wood in his bag and was one over the 14-club limit. The error cost him a four-stroke penalty but he played on for an ultimate 72 that included the added strokes. Charles was among those at 68.

Both Rodriguez and Gilbert were a stroke over the course record with their 64's. Rodriguez, the 126-pound Puerto Rican, had nothing but 4's and 3's on his card of 32, 32. He claimed it was his best round since the 1964 Open.

"I have to give credit to my caddie, Tommy Miscari," he said, "for it's important to have a caddie who helps you select the right club. What's more he's Sicilian and I'm Puerto Rican and what we have going for us is guts."

Gilbert, who won the 1970 Citrus open and plays from Hollywood, Fla., had three deuces among his birdies but he also had two 5's, both pars on his card. He came back in 30, which is six under par, and there have been only five previous nine-hole scores on the tour this season of 30 or under.

"At Phoenix this year Jerry Heard, who won the Citrus open in 1972, gave me a pep talk about my poor attitude and my lack of confidence in putting," explained Gilbert. "Every time I faked a 4-foot putt it scared me so much that I would shake. But those days are over and Heard has helped me get my old confidence back."

Scores on Page 27



United Press International

Chi Chi Rodriguez after sinking final putt in first round of Florida open.