

Nerveless Nacho Nails His First Win in China

A closing round of 72 for an aggregate total of 14 under par was enough to see off a whole host of challengers, but the bare numbers do not do justice to the drama that unfolded at Foshan Golf Club.

Having come into the inaugural US\$350,000 event in 50th place in the Challenge Tour Rankings, Elvira's chief aim was simply to secure his berth in the 45-man Dubai Festival City Challenge Tour Grand Final in a fortnight's time; but a radical revision will be needed after the winner's cheque for €41,234 moved the Spaniard into the all-important top 15.

For the latter stages of a fraught final day in Foshan City, where several thousand spectators basked in glorious sunshine, it had looked like a play-off would be needed to determine the winner.

Elvira, who held a three-shot lead overnight, got off to a fine start with a birdie on the second hole but, after a succession of pars, opened the door to his rivals with a bogey at the 15th hole.

That, combined with a 16th hole birdie from his playing partner Sam Walker and a two-birdie burst from Indian Shiv Kapur playing in the group ahead, meant the leading trio all teed off on the 18th on 14 under par, with Englishman Tyrrell Hatton one shot behind.

But when Tyrrell's birdie attempt shaved the hole and Kapur, whose tee shot found the bunker, lipped out for par to fall back to 13 under par, the stage was set for a showdown between Elvira and Walker.

When Walker's approach shot came up short of the green and Elvira's flew 50 feet past the hole, both looked in danger of dropping shots and giving Kapur an unlikely reprieve. But once Walker had failed to get up and down from the fringe, Elvira faced a 12-foot putt for victory – and he duly rolled it in with the confidence of a seasoned champion, rather than a first-time winner.

An emotional Elvira, who climbed from 50th to 13th in the Rankings, said: "This has to be one of the best days of my life. It's been an unbelievable week from the start, with the course and the crowds and the way we've been made to feel so welcome by everyone. I'm just so grateful I managed to finish the job off.

"I hadn't made a putt all day, but I said to my caddie on the last that if I was going to make one putt, now would be a good time to do it. It was an incredible feeling, and I'll never forget this day. I didn't play as well as I would've liked today, but I made the best up and down of my life for par from the edge of the water on the 17th, then to hole that putt on the last under such pressure was amazing.

"Your first win is always special, but to win here on such an amazing course and in such an incredible tournament, it really doesn't get any better. Obviously it gives me a great chance of

getting onto The European Tour, but I'm not thinking about that right now. I just want to enjoy the moment, then we will see what the next two weeks bring."

Walker, who signed off with a round of 70 for a 13 under par total, could at least console himself with a cheque for €20,617 which moved the Englishman to 12th place in the Rankings and within touching distance of a return to The European Tour.

His fellow runner-up Hatton (70) virtually guaranteed his place in The 2014 Race to Dubai after climbing to 11th, but there is more work to do for Kapur (69), who is in 19th place.

The same goes for England's Phil Archer, who is three places below the Indian after finishing fifth on 11 under par.