



## 2015 Barbasol Championship

(The 37<sup>th</sup> of 43 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

**Opelika/Auburn, Ala.      July 13-19, 2015**  
**Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National (Lake Course)**

**Purse: \$3,500,000 (\$630,000)**  
**Par/Yards: 35-36—71/7,302**  
**FedExCup: 300 (winner)**

### First-Round Notes – Thursday, July 16, 2015

*Weather: Partly cloudy, with highs in the mid-90s. Winds WNW 7-12 mph.*

#### **First-Round Leaderboard**

Sam Saunders	64 (-7)
Jason Gore	65 (-6)

#### **Sam Saunders**

While images of golfing legend Arnold Palmer at St. Andrews ran heavy in Open Championship coverage, the World Golf Hall of Fame member's grandson, Sam Saunders, quietly opened with a career-low and bogey-free, 7-under 64, thousands of miles away in Opelika, Ala.

Interestingly, 54 years ago this week (July 14), Palmer captured his first of two Open Championship titles. August 20<sup>th</sup> of this year will also mark the 60-year anniversary of Palmer's first career win on the PGA TOUR, the 1955 RBC Canadian Open.

As a professional, Palmer won the 1955 RBC Canadian Open in his 30<sup>th</sup> start on TOUR. Should he win this week, Saunders would do so in his 45<sup>th</sup> start as a professional.

Saunders' 64 marked his third bogey-free score on the PGA TOUR; 3-under 67 in round two of 2011 FedEx St. Jude Classic (MC) and 4-under 66 in round one of the 2010 Waste Management Phoenix Open (MC).

Saunders is making his 24<sup>th</sup> start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season, having earned his way out via the Web.com Tour. His 13<sup>th</sup>-place finish on that Tour's 2014 priority list afforded him his first, full season on the PGA TOUR.

Saunders nearly claimed his first TOUR title earlier this season at the Puerto Rico Open. With a final-round, 4-under 68, he played his way into sudden death with Emiliano Grillo, Jon Curran, Tim Petrovic and eventual winner Alex Cejka.

Before today, Saunders had never been higher than T4 after any first, second or third round on the PGA TOUR.

The first-round leader has emerged victorious just five of 33 times on the PGA TOUR this season. The last to do so was Bubba Watson at the Travelers Championship three weeks ago.

#### **Jason Gore**

Jason Gore birdied four of his last five holes (Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 9) en route to a 6-under 64 which, in relation to par, ties his lowest score of the year (64/R1/Travelers Championship).

Gore made a return to the PGA TOUR for the 2014-15 season by virtue of his 10<sup>th</sup>-place finish on the 2014 Web.com Tour priority list. On that Tour last year, he claimed a pair of runner-up finishes, as well as two third-place showings.

Gore, who initially joined the PGA TOUR in 2001, has bounced between the Web.com Tour and PGA TOUR since. The 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season marks his first, full-time return to the TOUR since 2009.

Gore is making his 20<sup>th</sup> start of the 2014-15 season, with a T10 at the Travelers Championship being his only top-10 finish. He is making his 242<sup>nd</sup> overall start on TOUR, having amassed 15 top 10s and one win (2005 84 Lumber Classic).

### **Martin Flores**

Texas native Martin Flores made seven birdies and just two bogeys en route to a 5-under 66. He bogeyed the par-5 sixth hole and wasn't able to get up and down to save par at No. 18, a par four.

Flores remains in search of his first career PGA TOUR win in his 136<sup>th</sup> start this week. His best finish is solo-third at the 2014 Wells Fargo Championship.

Flores is making his 26<sup>th</sup> start of the season this week, with a best finish being T16 at the Puerto Rico Open.

Flores hit 10 of 14 fairways in regulation and 16 of 18 greens.

Flores made a return to the TOUR this season by virtue of his 112<sup>th</sup>-place finish on the 2014 FedExCup points list.

Flores' rookie year on the PGA TOUR was 2010. Unable to maintain his card for the following season, he played the Web.com Tour in 2011, where his 24<sup>th</sup>-place finish on the money list graduated him back to the PGA TOUR. He has been there since.

Currently at No. 150 in FedExCup standings, Flores needs to finish inside the top 125 to retain his fully-exempt status for next season and make his way into the Playoffs this season.

### **Will Wilcox**

Birmingham native Will Wilcox took advantage of a home state vibe and opened with a 5-under 66.

Wilcox grew up just outside Birmingham in Pell City. He lived and worked temporarily in the Opelika/Auburn area. His mother played golf at Auburn University.

Wilcox played golf for the University of Alabama-Birmingham, before transferring to Clayton State in Georgia. There, Wilcox was a three-time All-America, winner of the Peach Belt Conference Championship and seven other college events. He also won the 2008 Alabama Amateur.

Because of travel delays this week, Wilcox was only able to play the front nine on Tuesday. Because of inclement weather Wednesday, he only got through the front nine again during the pro-am. Today's first round was the first time Wilcox ever laid eyes on Grand national's back nine. On Nos. 10-18, he made three birdies and one bogey.

Wilcox, who earned conditional status to the PGA TOUR this season after finishing No. 142 in 2013-14 FedExCup standings, is making his 13<sup>th</sup> start of the season. He has collected top-10 finishes at the Puerto Rico Open (T6) and last week's John Deere Classic (T8). He comes into the week ranked No. 128 in FedExCup points.

### **Maverick McNealy**

Playing on a sponsor invitation, Division I Jack Nicklaus Player of the Year Award winner Maverick McNealy opened with a 5-under 66, highlighted by five birdies and an eagle-three at No. 5. The Stanford golfer is currently the No. 2 amateur in the world and is making his third career start on the PGA TOUR this week (T60/2015 The Greenbrier Classic and MC/2014 U.S. Open).

### **Erik Compton**

On the heels of four-consecutive missed cuts, Erik Compton birdied his last hole (No. 9) to open with a 4-under 67. The 67 today is his lowest opening-round score since posting a 6-under 66 in round one of the Zurich Classic of New Orleans.

Compton remains in search of his first career win on the PGA TOUR this week in his 132<sup>nd</sup> start. Compton's closest brush with victory came at the 2014 U.S. Open, where he finished T2. Compton held a share of the 54-hole lead earlier this year at the CareerBuilder Challenge in Palm Springs, before a final-round, 2-under 70 resulted in a T10, his lone top-10 finish in 23 starts this season.

### **Miscellaneous Notes**

The Barbasol Championship is the first PGA TOUR event in Alabama since the 1990 PGA Championship.

With only eight events remaining before the FedExCup Playoffs, the Barbasol Championship will play an important role in the field for the first Playoffs event at The Barclays.

### The Barbasol Championship and the FedExCup Playoffs

In 2014, it took 438 FedExCup points (No. 125/Robert Allenby) to qualify for the FedExCup Playoffs. Below are players in the field that are currently on "the bubble" for the FedExCup Playoffs:

<b>FedExCup Position</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>FedExCup Points</b>
120	Mark Wilson	391
123	Brian Stuard	377
124	Billy Hurley III	372
126	Scott Langley	365
128	Will Wilcox	358
129	Alex Prugh	353
130	Brice Garnett	352
132	Blayne Barber	345
134	Michael Thompson	339
135	Charlie Beljan	337
140	Ryo Ishikawa	321

Players with ties to the State of Alabama include: Smylie Kaufman/Birmingham native (71), Blayne Barber/Auburn (69), Josh Broadaway/Troy State (76), Glen Day/born in Mobile, (72), Patton Kizzire/Auburn (71), Steve Lowery/Alabama (71), Ben Schlottman/ Auburn (75), Robby Shelton/Alabama (68), Heath Slocum/South Alabama (74), Zack Sucher/UAB (71), Michael Thompson/Alabama (67), Brett Wetterich/Wallace State Community College(71) and Will Wilcox/UAB (66).

Michael Thompson is in the last year of his exemption from winning the 2013 Honda Classic. He is currently outside of the top 125 in the FedExCup standings, at No. 134. Thompson attended Tulane University two seasons until the school disbanded its golf team after Hurricane Katrina. He transferred to the University of Alabama and was the 2008 SEC Player of the Year.

### Other Barbasol Championship sponsor invitation recipients

Richy Werenski, winner of the Golf Channel's reality TV competition program "The Big Break," earned an exemption through the show. Werenski is a Web.com Tour member and has never made a start on the PGA TOUR. Werenski opened with a 2-over 73.

Former Auburn golfer Patton Kizzire is currently No. 1 on the Web.com Tour money list. He will be looking for his second made cut in his fourth career start on the PGA TOUR (T54/2014 McGladrey Classic). Kizzire opened with an even-par 71 at this week's Barbasol Championship.

Entering his sophomore season at Auburn, Ben Schlottman is making his first career start on TOUR. He was the SEC Freshman of the Year and earned 2015 All-SEC first-team (first freshman in Auburn history to be named All-SEC first-team). Schlottman posted a 4-over 75 in today's first round.

Entering his junior season at Alabama, Robby Shelton is making his second career start in a PGA TOUR event. He missed the cut last season at the U.S. Open. Shelton opened with a 2-under 68.

### Bogey-free rounds:

R1: Sam Saunders (64), David Toms (69), Austin Cook (69) and Tyrone Van Aswegen (70).

Scoring Averages at the par-71 Grand National (Lake Course):

	<b>Front 9</b>	<b>Back 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
R1:	35.754	35.006	70.760	

Morning Scoring Average: 70.61

Afternoon Scoring Average: 70.92

The easiest hole in round one was par-5 13<sup>th</sup> hole, playing to an average of 4.315. The most difficult hole was the par-3 eighth, with an average of 3.423.