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**2015 Northern Trust Open pre-tournament notes**

**Dates:** February 18-22, 2015

**Where:** The Riviera Country Club, Pacific Palisades, Calif.

**Par/Yards:** 35-36--71/7,439 yards

**Field:** 144 players

**2014 champion:** Bubba Watson, 269 (-15)

**Purse:** \$6.7 million; \$1,206,000 to the winner

**FedExCup:** 500 points to the winner

**Format:** Four-day, 72-hole stroke-play competition; 144 players, cut to low 70 and ties after 36 holes

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/NorthernTrustOpen>

**Twitter:** @NTrustOpen

**How the 2014 Northern Trust Open was won by Bubba Watson**

Bubba Watson shot matching weekend rounds of 64 and went bogey-free to win by two shots over Dustin Johnson. Watson came from four shots back on the final day to claim the victory. The win was his first on TOUR since the 2012 Masters. Watson (70-71-64-64) was the only player in the field to go bogey-free on the weekend at The Riviera Country Club. The win was the fifth of Watson's PGA TOUR career and came at the age of 35 years, 3 months and 11 days in his 197<sup>th</sup> career start. It was Watson's fourth come-from-behind victory of his career.

**Bubba Watson at the 2014 Northern Trust Open**

- Led the field in Driving Distance for the week (304 yards), while still finishing T8 in Driving Accuracy
- Finished T3 in Greens in Regulation for the week
- Win followed up a T2 finish at the Waste Management Phoenix Open where he entered the final round with a two-shot lead over Kevin Stadler; he is once again coming into the Northern Trust Open following a T2 finish at the Waste Management Phoenix Open
- Became the 32<sup>nd</sup> come-from-behind winner at the Northern Trust Open since 1948
- Went on to capture his second Masters Tournament just two months later

**A look at the field**

- Brandt Snedeker won last week's AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. The win was the seventh of his career and second at the event, having also won it in 2013. With the win, Snedeker improved his Official World Golf Ranking and is now inside the top 50, which will qualify him for the World Golf Championships events. He also keeps his streak of consecutive Masters starts alive and will make his eighth start in a row in April.
- Jimmy Walker enters the week on the strength of another fast start that has included four top-10 finishes, including an eight-stroke win at the Sony Open in Hawaii (where he defended his title), and a playoff loss to Patrick Reed at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions. He is once again on top of the FedExCup standings, a spot he has occupied for five weeks in a row; last season he set a record for consecutive weeks at No. 1 in the standings with 30 weeks in a row.
- Eighteen of the 30 players who qualified for the 2014 TOUR Championship are in the field this week, including Jim Furyk, Sergio Garcia, Gary Woodland, Russell Henley, Bubba Watson, Cameron Tringale, Bill Haas, Brendon Todd, Jimmy Walker, Kevin Na, Hideki Matsuyama, Hunter Mahan, Webb Simpson, John Senden, Morgan Hoffmann, Jordan Spieth, Geoff Ogilvy and Dustin Johnson.
- From the FedExCup standings through the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, the field includes 23 of the top 30 players, including seven of the top 10: Jimmy Walker (No. 1); Robert Streb (2); Bubba Watson (3); Brandt Snedeker (5); Charley Hoffman (6) Sang-Moon Bae (7); and Ben Martin (10).
- Three former FedExCup champions are in the field: Vijay Singh (2009); Jim Furyk (2010); and Bill Haas (2011), who won the Northern Trust Open in 2012.

- From the Official World Golf Ranking through the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, 11 of the top 30 are in the field and 20 of the top 50.
- Austrian Bernd Wiesberger is making his first start at the Northern Trust Open via sponsor's exemption. Wiesberger has not played much in the United States, winning two events on the European Tour in 2012 (Lyonesse Open, Ballantine's Championship). He is the 38<sup>th</sup> ranked player in the Official World Golf Rankings.
- Reigning Masters and Northern Trust Open Champion Bubba Watson will be teeing it up at the Northern Trust Open as the highest-ranked player in the Official World Golf Ranking at No. 3. He already picked up a win this season at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions in China in the fall of 2014.
- Dustin Johnson is making his third start following a leave of absence from golf. He missed the cut at the Farmers Insurance Open and finished T4 last week at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.
- Ten of the 13 different PGA TOUR winners from the 2014-15 season are in the field this week: Sang-Moon Bae (Frys.com Open); Ben Martin (Shriners Hospitals for Children Open); Robert Streb (McGladrey Classic; Ryan Moore (CIMB Classic); Bubba Watson (World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions); Nick Taylor (Sanderson Farms Championship); Charley Hoffman (OHL Classic at Mayakoba); Jimmy Walker (Sony Open); Bill Haas (Humana Challenge); and Brandt Snedeker (AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am).
- Past Champions of the Northern Trust Open in the field include Robert Allenby-2001; Fred Couples-1990, 1992; Ernie Els-1999; Bill Haas-2012; Rory Sabbatini-2006; Charles Howell III-2007; Aaron Baddeley-2011; John Merrick-2013; Bubba Watson-2014; and Mike Weir 2003-04.
- On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his first win at The Riviera Country Club, Fred Couples will make his 33<sup>rd</sup> start at the event, via a sponsor's exemption, extending his record for the most starts in tournament history (Gene Littler is second with 30). Couples will look to add to an already impressive resume at the Northern Trust Open. In addition to his two victories, Couples has collected 12 other top 10s, including runner-up finishes in 1993, 1994 and 1996. He held the 36-hole lead in 2011 at 8-under and was in contention in the final round after three-consecutive birdies to open the round, but fell off the pace after a double bogey at No. 7 and eventually finished T7. After three turns as U.S. Team captain, Couples will be a captain's assistant to Jay Haas at this fall's Presidents Cup in South Korea.
- K.J. Choi, a vice-captain for the International Team at The Presidents Cup 2015 in South Korea, is also in the field, along with fellow Korean and International Team hopeful Sang-Moon Bae.
- On Monday, the first Northern Trust Open Collegiate Showcase will kick off tournament week. Fourteen standout collegiate golfers from across the country and two amateurs, representing their respective universities, will play alongside PGA TOUR professionals from the same university. The professional and the two amateurs will team up in a best-ball competition for a \$50,000 donation to the university's golf program. Each collegian will play his own ball with the low medalist earning a spot in the Northern Trust Open field.

UNIVERSITY	PROFESSIONAL	COLLEGIAN
Oklahoma State	Morgan Hoffmann	Brendon Jelley
Wake Forest	Bill Haas	Will Zalatoris
Kentucky	J.B. Holmes	Tyler (Chip) McDaniel
Texas A&M	Ryan Palmer	Greg Yates
Arizona	Jim Furyk	George Cunningham
Clemson	Ben Martin	Cody Proveaux
UCLA	Kevin Chappell	Jonathan Garrick
University of the Pacific	James Field Jr.	Byron Meth
UC Riverside	Brendan Steele	David Gazzolo
Pepperdine	Michael Putnam	Kevin DeHuff
USC	Dave Stockton Jr.	Rico Hoey
Georgia	Harris English	Lee McCoy
Oregon	Casey Martin	Brandon McIver
Texas	Jordan Spieth	Kramer Hickok

- Carlos Sainz Jr. was awarded the 2015 Northern Trust Open Exemption. Sainz won the prestigious Chicago Open in 2013, and earned his PGA TOUR card for 2014-15 via his strong play in the Web.com Tour Finals. Sainz, a rookie on the PGA TOUR, was chosen from a pool of applicants to receive the exemption, created and sponsored by Northern Trust that provides an opportunity for a top golfer who represents the advancement of diversity in golf and wouldn't otherwise be eligible for the tournament. Sainz comes from half Pilipino and half Bolivian background. Sainz attended Mississippi State University where he was runner-up to Billy Horschel at the 2009 SEC Championship. After graduating, he

competed on PGA TOUR Canada in 2013, earning his Web.com Tour status. He is the seventh recipient of the exemption.

- Three time major champion Pádraig Harrington is in the field via sponsor's exemption. His best finish is a T3 in 2008.
- Max Homa and Justin Thomas are in the field via sponsor's exemptions as Web.com Tour graduates. Thomas has three top 10s in his first nine events this season, and local favorite (and UC-Berkeley grad) Max Homa is making his second start at the Northern Trust Open; he earned a sponsor's exemption last year as well and missed the cut.

### **Miscellaneous tournament notes**

- The field for World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship will be partially set following play at the Northern Trust Open. Any player in the top 50 of the Official World Golf Ranking following the tournament will be eligible for the Cadillac Championship.
- There have been seven back-to-back winners in the 88-year history of the Northern Trust Open:
  - MacDonal Smith (1928-1929, 1932, 1934)
  - Ben Hogan (1942, 1947-48)
  - Paul Harney (1964-65)
  - Arnold Palmer (1963, 1966-67)
  - Corey Pavin (1994-95)
  - Mike Weir (2003-04)
  - Phil Mickelson (2008-09)
- There have been nine first-time winners at the Northern Trust Open:
  - Victor Ghezzi, 1935
  - Johnny Bulla, 1941
  - Fred Wampler, 1954
  - Phil Rodgers, 1962
  - TC Chen, 1987
  - Chip Beck, 1988
  - Kirk Triplett, 2000
  - Len Mattiace, 2002
  - John Merrick, 2013