



**2015 Shell Houston Open**  
(The 21<sup>st</sup> of 43 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

**Humble, TX**  
**Golf Club of Houston (Tournament Course)**

**April 2-5, 2015**

**Purse: \$6,600,000 (\$1,188,000 to the winner)**  
**Par/Yards: 36-36—72/7,441**

### **First-Round Notes – Thursday, April 2, 2015**

#### **Weather**

*Partly cloudy, with a high of 82. Winds S 10-20 mph, with gusts to 25 mph.*

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

Scott Piercy	63 (-9)
Alex Cejka	65 (-7)
J.B. Holmes	65 (-7)

#### **Scott Piercy**

Beginning on No. 10, Scott Piercy reeled off five consecutive birdies on Nos. 18-4 en route to a course-record-tying, 9-under 63. Johnson Wagner (2008), Adam Scott (2008), Jimmy Walker (2011) and Phil Mickelson (2011) were the others to have posted the score.

Piercy hit 12 of 14 fairways in regulation (85.7 percent) and missed just one green (No. 3).

Piercy began the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season on a Major Medical Extension, as he continued to recover from surgery to repair a torn flexor in February of last year. He had 14 events this season to earn 200 FedExCup points or \$300,710. It took him just five starts to surpass the necessary points/money.

Piercy is making his fifth start at the Shell Houston Open and first since 2012. His best finish in the event is a T42 (2009 and 2011).

Piercy is making his 13<sup>th</sup> start of the season, having collected top-10 finishes at the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open (T7) and Sony Open in Hawaii (2<sup>nd</sup>).

Piercy is in search of his third career PGA TOUR win this week, with previous victories coming at the 2011 Barracuda Championship and 2012 RBC Canadian Open.

Piercy has previously held a lead/co-lead after 18 holes twice, most recently at the 2012 RBC Canadian Open, which he won.

#### **First-Round Lead Statistics**

Two of 20 first-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win so far in 2015, Sangmoon Bae (Frys.com Open) and James Hahn (Northern Trust Open).

Since 2000, five first-round leaders of the Shell Houston Open have parlayed that position into a win: D.A. Points (2013), Johnson Wagner (2008), Stuart Appleby (2006), Vijay Singh (2005) and Fred Couples (2003).

After round one last year, eventual champion Matt Jones was three strokes back at 4-under 68.

#### **J.B. Holmes**

Beginning on No. 10, J.B. Holmes got off to the quickest start in round one, holing his second shot on his opening hole from 85 yards for an eagle-two. Holmes would add birdies at Nos. 12, 13, 17, 18, 4, and 5 to open with a 7-under 65. His lone bogey of the day came at the par-4 sixth hole.

Making his sixth start in the Shell Houston Open, Holmes has already experienced success at the Golf Club of Houston. He finished second in 2009, T8 in 2012 and T12 last year.

Holmes comes to the Golf Club of Houston this week with three PGA TOUR titles to his credit, the 2006 and 2008 Waste Management Phoenix Open and 2014 Wells Fargo Championship.

In 10 starts on TOUR this season before this week, Holmes has already collected a pair of runner-up finishes. He lost to Jason Day in sudden death at the Farmers Insurance Open and finished solo-second at the World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship.

### **Alex Cejka**

A month removed from his first career PGA TOUR victory at the Puerto Rico Open, Alex Cejka made six birdies in an eight-hole stretch before posting a 7-under 65.

This marks Cejka's ninth start in the Shell Houston Open and first since 2011. Having not enjoyed much success here in the past, his best finish is a T21 in his first start of 2003.

So far this season, Cejka has claimed four top-25 finishes in 13 starts with his win in Puerto Rico his only top-10.

### **Phil Mickelson**

Starting on No. 10, 2011 Shell Houston Open champion Phil Mickelson birdied five of his first nine holes en route to 6-under 66.

Mickelson's 66 today is his best opening-round score in a PGA TOUR event since opening with an 8-under 63 at the 2013 Deutsche Bank Championship.

Mickelson's only better opening round in 10 previous Shell Houston Open starts is a 7-under 65 in 2012.

Had it not been for a bogey at his last hole of the day, the par-3 ninth, this would have been Mickelson's first bogey-free score since posting a 3-under 67 in round three of the 2014 FedEx St. Jude Classic.

Mickelson is making his 11<sup>th</sup> start in this week's Shell Houston Open, and eighth consecutive. A year after his 2011, he finished T4 at the Golf Club of Houston. Today's 66 is his 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive round of par-or-better at Golf Club of Houston.

Last year, Mickelson opened with a bogey-free, 4-under 68 en route to T12 honors. His best opening round in the event is a 7-under 65 (2012/T4).

Among his 42 TOUR wins are four from the state of Texas; 1996 AT&T Byron Nelson Championship, 2000 and 2008 Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial and 2011 Shell Houston Open.

Mickelson's most recent win on the PGA TOUR is the 2013 Open Championship, his fifth major championship title. His lone top-10 finish last season was solo-second at the PGA Championship.

Mickelson has made four cuts in six starts this season, with a T17 at The Honda Classic his best showing. He is coming off a T30 finish at last week's Valero Texas Open.

### **Shawn Stefani**

Houston's Shawn Stefani opened with a bogey-free 66 in his fourth-consecutive start at the Shell Houston Open. Stefani finished fifth at the Golf Club of Houston last year.

Stefani is making his 54<sup>th</sup> start on the PGA TOUR this week, where he remains in search of his first win. He has collected a pair of runner-up finishes; 2014 Quicken Loans National and 2015 OHL Classic at Mayakoba.

As a kid, Stefani was active with the First Tee of Houston and Houston Golf Association.

### **Luke Guthrie**

In round one, Luke Guthrie hit all 18 greens in regulation on his way to a bogey-free, 6-under 66. He hit 10 of 14 fairways (71.4 percent).

Guthrie is making his third-consecutive start in the Shell Houston Open this week, where today's 66 marks his best score by eight strokes. He missed both previous cuts.

Guthrie is making his 13<sup>th</sup> start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season and 70<sup>th</sup> on the PGA TOUR. Still in search of his first TOUR win, Guthrie's best finish is third at the 2013 Honda Classic.

### **Miscellaneous Notes**

Houston resident **Patrick Reed** opened with a 4-under 68 that included a pair of hole-outs. He holed his third shot on the par-5 fourth from 99 yards and his second shot from the rough from 37 feet at the par-3 ninth hole. Reed is looking to join fellow Texan Jimmy Walker as a multiple winner this season. Interestingly, Reed beat Walker in sudden death for his first win of the season at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions.

2009 Shell Houston Open champion **Paul Casey** eagled Nos. 4 and 15, both par fives, in round one to post a 4-under 68. Casey becomes the first player in tournament history to eagle Nos. 4 and 15 in the same round.

This week's Shell Houston Open winner receives, if not previously eligible, the last "win and you're in" invitation to the Masters Tournament.

There are 35 players in this week's Shell Houston Open scheduled to compete in next week's Masters Tournament.

Two players have won the week prior to the Masters Tournament, and then gone on to win in Augusta – Sandy Lyle (Greater Greensboro Open) in 1988 and Phil Mickelson (BellSouth Classic) in 2006.

There are seven past Shell Houston Open winners: Matt Jones/2014 (72), D.A. Points/2013 (71), Hunter Mahan/2012 (67), Phil Mickelson/2011 (63), Paul Casey/2009 (68), Johnson Wagner/2008 (69) and Robert Allenby/2000 (73).

Bogey-free rounds:

R1 – Scott Piercy (63), Luke Guthrie (66), Charles Howell III (66), Shawn Stefani (66), Alex Prugh (67), Michael Thompson (68), Scott Brown (68), Johnson Wagner (69), Jhonattan Vegas (69), Russell Henley (69), Bryce Molder (69) and Cody Gribble (70).

Scoring Averages:

	<b>Front 9</b>	<b>Back 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
R1	35.438	35.514	70.951	---

The most difficult hole in round one was the par-3 16<sup>th</sup> (3.188). The easiest proved to be the par-5 eighth (4.640).