



## JOHN DEERE CLASSIC

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### 2015 John Deere Classic Pre-Tournament Notes

**Dates:** July 6-12, 2015

**Where:** TPC Deere Run, Silvis, Ill.

**Par/Yards:** 35-36--71/7,268 yards

**Field:** 156

**2014 champion:** Brian Harman

**Purse:** \$4,700,000/\$846,000 (winner)

**FedExCup:** 500 points (winner)

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play

**Website:** [johndeereclassic.com](http://johndeereclassic.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook/johndeereclassic](https://www.facebook.com/johndeereclassic)

**Twitter:** @JDClassic

### A look at the 2014 John Deere Classic

Brian Harman parlayed his one-stroke lead after 54 holes at 17-under into a one-stroke victory at 22-under 262. His lead after 54 holes was over three-time John Deere Classic winner Steve Stricker, and then Harman went on to defeat 2012 John Deere Classic champion Zach Johnson. With his win, Harman claimed the final spot to the following week's Open Championship (T26), his first start in the event. Harman also became the John Deere Classic's first left-handed winner since Sam Adams in 1973.

### More on Brian Harman

Thanks in large part to his win at TPC Deere Run last year, Harman made it through the first three events of the FedExCup Playoffs before finishing a career-best 36<sup>th</sup> in the FedExCup standings. So far this season, Harman has collected top-10 finishes at THE PLAYERS Championship (T8), Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial (T10) and Travelers Championship two weeks ago (3<sup>rd</sup>). Harman's title defense this week marks his fourth start in the John Deere Classic. Before his win, he missed the cut in 2013 and finished T19 in 2012.

### Jordan Spieth

Jordan Spieth, 2013 John Deere Classic winner, is in the midst of a record-breaking season, just his third on the PGA TOUR.

- Spieth's 2013 win at TPC Deere Run was his sixth of nine top-10 finishes. As a result, Spieth qualified for all four of the FedExCup Playoffs events. At 20 years, 1 month and 26 days on the Sunday of the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola, Spieth became the youngest player to play in the event. His remarkable play in 2013 also warranted his being a selection by U.S. Team Captain Fred Couples to play in The Presidents Cup. As such, he was the youngest player to ever compete for the U.S. Team in a Presidents Cup and became the first rookie to ever compete in a Presidents Cup. Spieth would go on to earn 2013 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year honors.
- Spieth is a collective 41-under-par at the John Deere Classic. His only over-par round is a 1-over 72 in the third round of 2012.
- In the 2013-14 PGA TOUR Season, Spieth claimed eight top-10 finishes in 27 starts, highlighted by a T2 finish at the Masters. He made his first Ryder Cup Team, where he went 2-1-1.
- So far in the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season, he has amassed wins at the Valspar Championship in a playoff, the Masters, where he won by four strokes in wire-to-wire fashion, and the U.S. Open.
- With his major championship victories, Spieth became the sixth player to win the Masters and U.S. Open in the same season and first since Tiger Woods in 2002.
- When Spieth won the U.S. Open, he extended his lead in the FedExCup points race (3,128) by 1,213 points over Jimmy Walker (1,915). It marked the first time during the regular season that the margin between first and second has been more than 1,000 points since the points-allocation system was revamped in 2009.
- When he won the U.S. Open, Spieth became the youngest to win two career majors since Gene Sarazen in 1922.

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- With his win at Chambers Bay, Spieth joined only Tiger Woods as players who have collected four PGA TOUR titles before their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, dating to 1940.
- With four wins and eight runner-up finishes, Spieth has the most first- and second-place finishes by a TOUR player before the age of 22 since 1970: Spieth (12), Tiger Woods (7), Sergio Garcia (6), Bobby Clampett (5) and Rickie Fowler (3).
- With the exception of a 1-over 71 in round three of the U.S. Open, Spieth has posted a sub-par score in every round of the season's first two major championships.
- In addition to his three wins this season, Spieth has collected top-10 finishes at the Waste Management Phoenix Open (T7), Northern Trust Open (T4), Valero Texas Open (2<sup>nd</sup>), Shell Houston Open (2<sup>nd</sup>/playoff), Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial (T2) and the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide (T3).

### **Zach Johnson**

Zach Johnson is perhaps the most popular winner in tournament history (2012), given his ties to the event and the area.

- Johnson is a native of Cedar Rapids and played collegiately at Drake University in Des Moines.
- Johnson serves on the Board of Directors for the John Deere Classic.
- Johnson is a University of Iowa supporter, who has played in Pro-Am with Hawkeye head football coach Kirk Ferenz in the past.
- When heavy rains caused flooding in the Midwest in the summer of 2008, Johnson served as the spokesman on a public service announcement and held a one-day golf event in Cedar Rapids that raised \$350,000. Along with Jerry Kelly, he was instrumental in starting the PGA TOUR Flood Relief effort, which donated approximately \$125,000 to the cause.
- In July 2010, Johnson announced formation of the Zach Johnson Foundation to benefit children in need in the Greater Cedar Rapids area. The Zach Johnson Foundation Classic and Gala raised \$1 million during its second event in 2012. Those dollars support Kids on Course, a pilot program at Van Buren Elementary and Harrison Elementary Schools.
- In 2014, John Deere announced a multi-year sponsorship of Johnson. Johnson's bag features the John Deere logo, and a portion of the company's sponsorship goes to the Zach Johnson Foundation.
- Johnson is making his 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive start at the John Deere Classic and will begin the week on the strength of 24 consecutive rounds in the 60s at TPC Deere Run (totaling 105-under-par). Not since the final round of 2008 (even-par 71) has Johnson posted a score in the 70s.
- Since 2011, Johnson has finished no worse than T3 in the event (T3-2011, 1<sup>st</sup>-2012, T2-2013 and 2<sup>nd</sup>-2014).
- So far this year, Johnson has collected five top-10 finishes, with his best being solo-fifth at the AT&T Byron Nelson.

### **Other notables in the field**

- Continuing a limited playing schedule, three-time John Deere Classic champion Steve Stricker has made just six starts on the PGA TOUR this year. His best finish is a T27 at the Crowne Plaza invitational at Colonial. At last week's Greenbrier Classic, Stricker missed the cut. Making his 14<sup>th</sup> career start at the John Deere Classic, Stricker will attempt to add a fourth John Deere Classic to his resume. Stricker, who won at TPC Deere Run consecutively from 2009-2011, finished T5 and T10 in 2012 and 2013, respectively.
- University of Illinois grad Scott Langley is poised to make his fourth start in the John Deere Classic. Following a missed cut in 2011, Langley finished T33 in 2013 and T27 last year. A former participant in The First Tee, Langley's career-best finish came last season with third-place honors at the Valspar Championship. Still in search of his first top-10 finish this season, his best showing is a T17 in the season's first start at the Frys.com Open.
- Fellow University of Illinois grad Luke Guthrie, a native of Quincy, Ill., has one top-10 finish this season, a T7 at the Valspar Championship. Guthrie is poised to make his fourth start in the John Deere Classic this week. His best finish, T5, came in his first start at TPC Deere Run in 2012. In 2013, he missed the cut and finished T27 last year with, among others, Scott Langley.
- South Carolina's Kevin Kisner collected his first of six top-10 finishes this year early at The McGladrey Classic (T4). His ensuing five, three of which were playoff losses at the RBC Heritage, PLAYERS Championship and last week's Greenbrier Classic, came in an eight-start stretch (P2/RBC Heritage, P2/PLAYERS Championship, T5/Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial, T8/the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide and P2/Greenbrier Classic). He finished just outside the top ten at the U.S. Open three weeks ago (T12). In that six-start stretch, he earned

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\$2,685,152. In his 41 career starts before the RBC Heritage, he collected a total of \$1,356,424. Before the RBC Heritage, Kisner was ranked 107<sup>th</sup> in FedExCup standings. He comes into this week's John Deere Classic ranked 11<sup>th</sup>.

- The world's former No. 1 amateur Patrick Rodgers made the cut on the number at the Travelers Championship two weeks ago, before posting a bogey-free, 7-under 63 in the third round en route to T39 honors. Previously a non-exempt player, the Avon, Ind., native's T40 finish at the Memorial Tournament earned him enough non-member FedExCup points (Inside No. 150 in 2014) to accept Special Temporary Membership. In doing so, he is now able to accept unlimited sponsor exemptions for the remainder of his 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season in his attempt to earn his 2015-16 TOUR card. Without Special Temporary Membership, Rodgers' only way into a PGA TOUR field the remainder of this season would have been via a top-10 finish this week or through Monday Qualifying. As a junior at Stanford last year in May, Rodgers won the prestigious Ben Hogan Award given to the "outstanding male amateur and collegiate golfer and of the year." A first team All-American and a member of the 2011 and 2013 Walker Cup teams, Rodgers won a Stanford record and an NCAA-best six tournaments last season, including the individual PAC 12 Championship. His 11 college victories tied a record set by Tiger Woods. Rodgers will be making his fourth-consecutive start in this week's John Deere Classic on a sponsor exemption.

#### **Tradition of young invitees continues**

The John Deere Classic's tradition of offering playing opportunities to deserving up-and-coming young players continues in 2015 with three sponsor invitations, in addition to Patrick Rodgers:

- Rising Southern Methodist University senior Bryson DeChambeau won the NCAA Individual Title this year and, as a result, qualified for the U.S. Open (missed cut). A week prior to his appearance at Chambers Bay, the 21-year-old received a sponsor invite into the FedEx St. Jude Classic, where he made the cut in his first-ever PGA TOUR event and finished T45.
- University of Georgia Bulldog Lee McCoy is poised to make his second-ever start on the PGA TOUR at this week's John Deere Classic. At the U.S. Open three weeks ago, the 21-year-old missed the cut after rounds of 74-74. McCoy claimed a share of Medalist honors at last year's U.S. Amateur.
- Three weeks ago, recent University of Illinois grad Brian Campbell not only made the cut at the U.S. Open, but posted sub-par scores of 67 and 68 in rounds one and four, respectively, to finish T27. His 67 in round one found him just two strokes off the lead and in a share of fourth place. He posted scores of 72-78 on Friday and Saturday, respectively, before his Sunday 68. In his only other start on the PGA TOUR, he missed the cut at the 2014 U.S. Open.

#### **A broader look at the field**

- Ten winners of PGA TOUR events in 2015 are in the field: Sangmoon Bae (Frys.com Open), Steven Bowditch (AT&T Byron Nelson), Alex Cejka (Puerto Rico Open), Matt Every (Arnold Palmer Invitational), Fabian Gomez (FedEx St. Jude Classic), Danny Lee (Greenbrier Classic), Ryan Moore (CIMB Classic), Jordan Spieth (Valspar Championship, Masters Tournament, U.S. Open), Robert Streb (The McGladrey Classic) and Nick Taylor (Sanderson Farms Championship).
- Eleven major championship winners, representing all four majors, will compete in this year's John Deere Classic: Stewart Cink (2009 Open Championship), Ben Curtis (2003 Open Championship), Lucas Glover (2009 U.S. Open), Retief Goosen (2001, 2004 U.S. Open), Todd Hamilton (2004 Open Championship), Trevor Immelman (2008 Masters), Zach Johnson (2007 Masters), Vijay Singh (2000 Masters, 1998, 2004 PGA Championship), Jordan Spieth (2015 Masters, 2015 U.S. Open), David Toms (2001 PGA Championship) and Mike Weir (2003 Masters).
- Five of the last eight John Deere Classic champions are in the field: Brian Harman (2014), Jordan Spieth (2013), Zach Johnson (2012), Steve Stricker (2009-2011) and Jonathan Byrd (2007). Sean O'Hair (2005), John Senden (2006) and Kenny Perry (2008) are not scheduled to compete.

#### **John Deere Classic notes**

- From 2000-06, five of the John Deere Classic's winners made the title their first on the PGA TOUR: John Senden (2006), Sean O'Hair (2005), Mark Hensby (2004), David Gossett (2001) and Michael Clark II (2000). From 2007-12, each champion had already amassed at least one win on the PGA TOUR. Jordan Spieth and Brian Harman joined the former group with their first-ever PGA TOUR wins in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

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- Since moving to the TPC Deere Run in 2000, only five of the 14 outcomes have been decided through a playoff (2013-Jordan Spieth, 2012-Zach Johnson, 2008-Kenny Perry, 2007-Mark Hensby and 2000-Michael Clark II).
- Since its 1971 inception, only five players have won the John Deere Classic more than once: Deane Beman (1971-72), D.A. Weibring (1979, 1991, 1995), Scott Hoch (1980, 1984), David Frost (1992-93) and three-time champion Steve Stricker (2009-11).
- Only 11 players have managed to win the week before winning a major. Since 2000, the only three players to achieve the feat were Phil Mickelson (2006 BellSouth Classic/Masters Tournament), Tiger Woods (2007 World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational/PGA Championship) and Rory McIlroy (2014 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational/PGA Championship).
- Paul Goydos' 59 in round one of the 2010 John Deere Classic made him just the fourth player to post the elusive score. The others: Al Geiberger (1977 FedEx St. Jude Classic), Chip Beck (1991 Shriners Hospitals for Children Open) and David Duval (1999 Humana Challenge). Stuart Appleby (2010 The Greenbrier Classic) and Jim Furyk (2013 BMW Championship) have since added their names to that list.
- In 2014, more than \$6.3 million was raised for charity through "Birdies for Charity" at the John Deere Classic. Annually, the John Deere Classic continues to raise more charitable dollars per capita than any other event on TOUR. Dating to 1971, the John Deere Classic has provided more than \$60 million to regional charities.
- For the first time ever, actor Bill Murray will play in Wednesday's pro-am, paired with Pekin, Ill., native D.A. Points. Points and Murray teamed up to win the 2012 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, where Points also claimed individual tournament honors.

#### **Open Qualifying Series**

Now in its second year, The Open Qualifying Series (OQS) is an international qualifying series involving events on the world's leading golf tours for The Open Championship, which takes place at St Andrews next week. The OQS offers players the opportunity to qualify for golf's oldest major championship at events on the PGA TOUR, the European Tour, the PGA Tour of Australasia and the Japan Golf Tour. Players on the PGA TOUR have the chance to qualify at three events: Travelers Championship, The Greenbrier Classic and John Deere Classic. The top four players, not previously eligible, who finish among the top 12 (and ties) at the Travelers Championship and The Greenbrier Classic will earn entry into The Open Championship. The top player among the top five (and ties) at the John Deere Classic will also qualify. If there are ties for the final spot(s), qualifiers are determined by Official World Golf Ranking.

At the Travelers Championship, defending John Deere Classic champion Brian Harman, Graham DeLaet, Carl Pettersson and Luke Donald qualified for The Open Championship via the Open Qualifying Series. Out of The Greenbrier Classic emerged Danny Lee, David Hearn, James Hahn and Greg Owen.

#### **2014-15 PGA TOUR Season Highlights**

So far in the 2015 calendar year, 14 of the 27 tournaments have been won by players in the top 25 in the Official World Golf Ranking at the time of their respective victories: Patrick Reed (23), Jimmy Walker (17th at Sony Open in Hawaii, 13th at Valero Texas Open), Jason Day (8), Dustin Johnson (16), Jordan Spieth (10th at the Valspar Championship, 4th at the Masters, 2nd at U.S. Open), J.B. Holmes (20), Jim Furyk (10), Justin Rose (8), Rickie Fowler (13) and Rory McIlroy (1st at the WGC-Cadillac Match Play and 1st at the Wells Fargo Championship).

So far this season, 14 of the 34 stroke-play events have been determined by a playoff, most recently at last week's Greenbrier Classic (Danny Lee).

The trend of young winners on TOUR has continued into the 2014-15 season as 12 of the 29 different winners have been under the age of 30, accounting for 15 wins, including:

- 25-year-old Rory McIlroy, with his win at the WGC-Cadillac Match Play joined Tiger Woods (29) and Jack Nicklaus (17) as the only players to win 10 events prior to their 26th birthday on TOUR in the last 75 years.
- 21-year-old Jordan Spieth, with his victories at the Valspar Championship, Masters Tournament and U.S. Open, became just the sixth player to win the Masters Tournament and U.S. Open in the same season. He joins the list which includes Tiger Woods (2002), Jack Nicklaus (1972), Arnold Palmer (1960), Ben Hogan (1951, 1953) and Craig Wood (1941). He is the youngest to win two career majors since Gene Sarazen in 1922.

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- 26-year-old Rickie Fowler finished birdie, eagle, birdie, birdie to shoot a final-round 66 and finish at 12-under-par at THE PLAYERS to enter a three-hole aggregate playoff with Kevin Kisner and Sergio Garcia, eventually prevailing after four holes. The 5-under-par total over the last four holes is a PGA TOUR record since the TOUR began tracking hole-by-hole scores in 1983.
- 24-year-old Patrick Reed became just the fifth player since 1991 to win four times before age of 25, joining Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Rory McIlroy and Sergio Garcia with his Hyundai Tournament of Champions win.

The rookie class of 24 players includes 21 players who began the season under the age of 30. Canadian Nick Taylor, a 2013 graduate of the PGA TOUR Canada and a 2014 graduate of the Web.com Tour, got off to a hot start by winning the Sanderson Farms Championship in October. Rookie members in the top 50 in the FedExCup standings include Daniel Berger (32) and Tony Finau (38).

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