



2015 John Deere Classic

(The 35th of 43 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

Silvis, IL
TPC Deere Run

July 6-12, 2015
Par/Yards: 35-36—71/7,268

Purse: \$4,700,000 (\$846,000)
FedExCup: 500 (winner)

First-Round Notes – Thursday, July 9, 2015

Weather: Partly cloudy, with an afternoon high of 75 degrees. Winds variable 5-10 mph.

First-Round Leaderboard

Justin Thomas	63 (-8)
Nicholas Thompson	63 (-8)

Justin Thomas

Making just his second start in the John Deere Classic (MC/2013), PGA TOUR rookie Justin Thomas birdied four straight holes twice en route to an 8-under 63 in round one. Beginning on No. 10, he birdied Nos. 13, 15-18, 3 and 5-8. His two bogeys came at the fourth and 14th holes, both par 4s.

Thomas was at even-par through five holes, before getting on the roll which would lead to the 8-under score.

Thomas hit 10 of 14 fairways in regulation and 16 of 18 greens. He needed 26 putts to complete his round, totaling 189' 9" of made putts.

Thomas' 63 is his lowest round on TOUR in relation to par since posting a 9-under 63 in round two of the CareerBuilder Challenge earlier this season in Palm Springs. He also posted a 9-under 61 in round two of the 2015 Sony Open in Hawaii, good for T6 honors.

In 23 starts on the PGA TOUR this season before this week, Thomas has amassed five top-10 finishes, his best being a T4 at the Sanderson Farms Championship. His most recent finish inside the top 10 was a T7 at the Wells Fargo Championship. In his four events since then, he has struggled, missing two cuts and finishing outside the top 50 in the other two.

Through 54 holes last week at The Greenbrier Classic, Thomas was just a stroke off the lead at 10-under-par. He added three early birdies Sunday on his first eight holes, before playing his last 10 holes in eight-over. Thomas settled for a tie for 54th place.

Thomas is making his 31st start as a professional this week on TOUR, with his best finish being his T4 at the Sanderson Farms Championship.

Thomas has previously never been higher than T4 after 18 holes on the PGA TOUR.

Nicholas Thompson

Making his seventh start at the John Deere Classic, the highlight of Nicholas Thompson's round was an eagle-2 from 79 yards at the 14th hole.

Thompson's 8-under 63 is his lowest opening-round score in relation to par since posting an 8-under 64 at this year's Farmers Insurance Open (finished T53).

Thompson makes his return to the PGA TOUR this season by virtue of his 126th-place finish in last season's FedExCup points standings.

Thompson is making his 26th start on the PGA TOUR this season, with his lone top-10 finish being a T9 at the OHL Classic at Mayakoba in November. His two best finishes outside of that have come in his last four starts. At

the AT&T Byron Nelson, he finished T16 and improved on that with a T15 finish two weeks ago at the Travelers Championship.

Thompson remains in search of his first win on the PGA TOUR in his 215th start. His best finish is a T2 at the 2008 Ginn sur Mer Classic in Southern Florida.

This marks the fourth occasion in which Thompson has been a leader/co-leader after 18 holes on the PGA TOUR. Most recently, his 64 at the Farmers Insurance Open was good for a one-stroke lead. Ensuing rounds of 73-76-78 resulted in his T53 finish.

Thompson missed just one of TPC Deere Run's 14 fairways in regulation and hit 14 of 18 greens. He needed just 24 putts to cover the round.

First-Round Lead Notes

Since moving to the TPC Deere Run in 2000, the only first-round leader to hold on for the win was Brian Harman last year.

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 two weeks ago.

Charles Howell III

Charles Howell III birdied his first four holes (Nos. 1-4) in round one en route to a bogey-free, 7-under 64.

Howell is making his 10th start in the John Deere Classic this week, with top-10 finishes in 2011 (T5) and 2000 (3rd). With today's 64, Howell has now played 33 of 35 rounds at TPC Deere Run in par-or-better. With a scoring average of 67.22, Howell has never posted a score above 69 in the second round of the event

Howell is in search of his third career PGA TOUR win this week. He is the winner of the 2002 Michelob Championship at Kingsmill and 2007 Northern Trust Open. His win at Riviera came 247 starts ago. A win this week would move him to second for the record number of starts between wins. Robert Gamez leads the category with 396.

Howell missed just one fairway (No. 8) and one green in regulation (No. 17).

Luke Guthrie

With his maternal grandmother in the gallery, Luke Guthrie birdied three of his last holes en route to 7-under 64, matching his best score in event from the final round of 2012.

Guthrie hit 10 of 14 fairways in regulation and missed just two greens, Nos. 9 and 18. He took 26 putts.

Guthrie, a Quincy, Illinois native, is making his fourth-consecutive start in the John Deere Classic. His best finish, T5, came in his first start of 2012. Guthrie played on a sponsor exemption that year.

Guthrie is in search of his first career win on the PGA TOUR this week in his 80th start. His best finish is a solo-third at the 2013 Honda Classic.

Guthrie is making his 23rd start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season this week, with his lone top-10 finish being a T7 at the Valspar Championship.

Steve Stricker

Continuing a limited playing schedule, three-time John Deere Classic champion Steve Stricker opened with a 6-under 65. In 2010, he opened with an 11-under 60, but still trailed Paul Goydos by a stroke.

Dating to 2010, Stricker is now 101-under par at TPC Deere Run. Since 2005, his only two, over-par scores were 1-over 72s in the final rounds of 2006 and 2014.

This week marks Stricker's seventh start 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 14th 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.

Zach Johnson

Zach Johnson is making his 14th consecutive start at the John Deere Classic and, with today's 5-under 66, extended his stretch of consecutive rounds in the 60s at TPC Deere Run to 25 (totaling 110-under-par). Not since the final round of 2008 (even-par 71) has Johnson posted a score in the 70s.

Johnson's 66 today was his 11th bogey-free round at TPC Deere Run, a tournament record. Kevin Sutherland trails him with eight.

Since 2011, Johnson has finished no worse than T3 in the event (T3-2011, 1st-2012, T2-2013 and 2nd-2014).

So far this year, Johnson has collected five top-10 finishes, with his best being solo-fifth at the AT&T Byron Nelson.

Johnson's first 18-hole lead on the PGA TOUR came at the 2006 John Deere Classic, following a 7-under 64. He finished T15.

Johnson serves on the Board of Directors for the John Deere Classic.

Jordan Spieth

2013 John Deere Classic champion Jordan Spieth opened with an even-par 71 and is eight strokes back. En route to his playoff victory at TPC Deere Run two years ago, Spieth opened with a 1-under 70 and began round two nine strokes back.

Spieth is now 0-4 at opening with a sub-70 score at TPC Deere Run. From 2012-2014, he opened with scores of 70-70-71, respectively.

In his last four starts before this week, Spieth opened with a score of no worse than 69.

Miscellaneous Notes

Defending John Deere Classic champion Brian Harman opened with a bogey-free, 4-under 67 and is four strokes back.

Making just his third start at the John Deere Classic, and first since 2004 (T4), 2003 champion Vijay Singh made the turn at 1-over 36. On his inward nine, he made five birdies in a six-hole stretch to post a 4-under 67.

Danny Lee, winner of last week's Greenbrier Classic, opened with a 3-under 68 and is five strokes back.

The John Deere Classic has produced 20 first-time PGA TOUR winners over the years – seven of those have come at TPC Deere Run (Michael Clark/2000, David Gossett/2001, Mark Hensby/2004, Sean O'Hair/2005, John Senden/2006, Jordan Spieth/2013 and Brian Harman/2014).

Five of the last eight John Deere Classic champions are in the field: Brian Harman/2014 (67), Jordan Spieth/ 2013 (71), Zach Johnson/2012 (66), Steve Stricker/2009-2011 (65) and Jonathan Byrd/2007 (68). Sean O'Hair (2005), John Senden (2006) and Kenny Perry (2008) are not in this year's field.

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.

From 1980-89, 1997-98 and 2004 to the present, the John Deere Classic has preceded The Open Championship. The best finish by a John Deere Classic winner in The Open Championship was Zach Johnson in 2012 when he finished T9 at Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club.

Year	Player	Tournament Name	Open Championship Finish
2014	Brian Harman	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T26
2013	Jordan Spieth	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T44
2012	Zach Johnson	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T9
2011	Steve Stricker	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T12
2010	Steve Stricker	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T55
2009	Steve Stricker	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T52
2008	Kenny Perry	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	DNP
2007	Jonathan Byrd	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T23
2006	John Senden	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T35
2005	Sean O'Hair	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	T15
2004	Mark Hensby	<i>John Deere Classic</i>	DNP
1998	Steve Jones	<i>Quad City Classic</i>	T57
1997	David Toms	<i>Quad City Classic</i>	DNP
1980-89	<i>*No winners competed in Open Championship during these years</i>		

Only 11 players have managed to win on the PGA TOUR 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). Mickelson won the Scottish Open the week prior to his 2013 Open Championship title.

There are 18 players in this week's field scheduled to compete in next week's Open Championship at St. Andrews. Currently, 20-23 players are scheduled to take advantage of the charter flight to Edinburgh Sunday night.

Brian Davis withdrew during the first round with a back injury.

Bogey-free rounds:

R1: Charles Howell III (64), Steven Alker (65), Spencer Levin (66), Will Wilcox (66), Zach Johnson (66), Alex Cejka (67), Brian Harman (67), Jhonattan Vegas (67), Adam Hadwin (68), Pat Perez (69), Roberto Castro (69), Scott Brown (69).

Scoring Averages at the par-71 TPC Deere Run:

	Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
R1:	34.460	35.069	65.529	

Morning Scoring Average: 69.74

Afternoon Scoring Average: 69.23

The easiest hole in round one was the par-5 second hole, playing to an average of 4.497. The most difficult hole was the par-4 18th, with an average of 4.167.