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## 2015 Sony Open in Hawaii Media Notes

**Dates:** January 15-18, 2015

**Where:** Waialae Country Club; Honolulu, Hawaii

**Par/Yards:** 35-35—70/7,044

**Field:** 144

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play

**Defending Champion:** Jimmy Walker

**Purse:** \$5,600,000; **Winner's Share:** \$1,008,000

**Note:** All four rounds will be played in threesomes off Nos. 1 and 10.

### A look back at the 2014 Sony Open in Hawaii

Jimmy Walker birdied four of his last five holes to shoot a bogey-free, 7-under-par 63 (Russell Henley posted the same score on the final day to win in 2013), winning the 2014 Sony Open in Hawaii by one stroke over 54-hole leader Chris Kirk. Walker finished with a four-day total of 17-under 263. Jerry Kelly (15-under), Harris English (14-under) and Marc Leishman (13-under) rounded out the top five.

### 2015 marks 50<sup>th</sup> playing of Sony Open in Hawaii

The Sony Open in Hawaii marks its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015 dating back to 1965 (there was no event in 1970). Waialae Country Club has the fourth-longest tenure as a host PGA TOUR venue, behind Augusta National, Pebble Beach GL and Trump National Doral's Blue Monster Course.

### Jimmy Walker set to defend

- Walker is seeking to become just the fourth player to successfully defend a title at the Sony Open in Hawaii – Hubert Green (1978-79), Corey Pavin (1986-87) and Ernie Els (2003-04).
- Walker's win was his second career title on the PGA TOUR and came in his sixth start of the season. His first career win, the Frys.com Open, came in the first event of the wrap-around season (10/13/13). He later added the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am to his resume.
- Walker's win at the Sony Open came in his 193<sup>rd</sup> start at the age of 34 years, 11 months, 27 days.
- Walker won the Sony Open in Hawaii in his eighth attempt. His only other top-10 finish was fourth in 2011.
- Walker became the sixth straight winner of the Sony Open in Hawaii to record four straight rounds in the 60s.
- Dating back to the second round of the 2012 event, Walker has recorded nine straight rounds under 70 at Waialae (19 out of his last 22). His final-round 63 last season was a career-best in Hawaii. In 2013, Walker shot a bogey-free 64 in the final round.

### The Rookies

- Seven former Rookies of the Year are in the Sony Open field: John Daly (1991), Vijay Singh (1993), Stewart Cink (1997), Charles Howell III (2001), Sean O'Hair (2005), Marc Leishman, (2009), John Huh (2012).
- Eighteen rookies are currently in the Sony Open field, including Blayne Barber, Daniel Berger, Zachary Blair, Jon Curran, Tony Finau, Oscar Fraustro, Adam Hadwin, Tom Hoge, Mark Hubbard, Carlos Ortiz, Sung Joon Park, Scott Pinckney, Andrew Putnam, Jonathan Randolph, Carlos Sainz Jr., Byron Smith, Nick Taylor and Justin Thomas.

### A closer look at the field

- 2014-15 tournament winners: Sang-Moon Bae (Frys.com Open), Ben Martin (Shriners Hospitals for Children Open), Robert Streb (McGladrey Classic), Nick Taylor (Sanderson Farms Championship).

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- Twenty-four of the 34 (71 percent) players in the Hyundai Tournament of Champions field are scheduled to play both events, including eight players who finished inside the top 10 last week at Kapalua: Jimmy Walker (2<sup>nd</sup>), Jason Day (T3), Russell Henley (T3), Hideki Matsuyama (T3), Sang-Moon Bae (6), Zach Johnson (7), Robert Streb (T8), Brendon Todd (T8).
- 2013-14 tournament winners: Steven Bowditch, Angel Cabrera, Tim Clark, Jason Day, Harris English, Matt Every, Brian Harman, Russell Henley, J.B. Holmes, Zach Johnson, Matt Jones, Chris Kirk, Matt Kuchar, Hideki Matsuyama, Seung-Yul Noh, Geoff Ogilvy, John Senden, Webb Simpson, Kevin Streelman, Brendon Todd, Camilo Villegas, Jimmy Walker.
- Twenty of the top 30 in the current FedExCup standings, including Robert Streb (1), Sang-Moon Bae (2), Ben Martin (3), Jimmy Walker (8), Tim Clark (9) and Hideki Matsuyama (10).
- Seven players in the top 25 in the Official World Golf Rankings: Jason Day (8), Matt Kuchar (11), Hideki Matsuyama (16), Zach Johnson (19), Chris Kirk (20), Jimmy Walker (21), and Kevin Na (25).
- Players in the field with six or more PGA TOUR wins: Vijay Singh (34 wins), Davis Love III (20), Kenny Perry (14), Justin Leonard (12), Zach Johnson (11), Stuart Appleby (9), K.J. Choi (8), Fred Funk (8), Geoff Ogilvy (8), Matt Kuchar (7), Rory Sabbatini (6), Stewart Cink (6).
- Past champions in the field: Jimmy Walker (2014), Russell Henley (2013), Johnson Wagner (2012), Mark Wilson (2011), Ryan Palmer (2010), Zach Johnson (2009), K.J. Choi (2008), Paul Goydos (2007), Vijay Singh (2005), Jerry Kelly (2002).

#### **Player notes**

- Vijay Singh will be making his 18<sup>th</sup> start at the Sony Open, with a win in 2005 among his four top 10s.
- Charles Howell III shot a bogey-free 66 in the final round a year ago to finish T8 at the Sony Open in Hawaii. In 13 career appearances at Waialae, he now has recorded eight top-10s, including three straight. He finished T2 in 2012 and T3 last year and in 2005. Howell was also T4 in both 2002 and solo fourth in 2009. Howell's check for \$119,000 last year moved his career earnings in the Sony Open in Hawaii to \$2,351,178.
- Tim Clark has finished runner-up in two of his last starts at the Sony Open (2011, 2013). He withdrew following an opening-round 73 in 2014. His other two starts at Waialae led to a T12 in 2009 and T25 in 2010.
- Luke Donald will make his first start since finishing T41 at the WGC-HSBC Champions. It will mark his eighth start at the Sony Open, with five top-25 finishes (T2-2007, T13-2002/2005, T20-2004, T23-2009).

#### **Tournament notes**

- Ernie Els (2003) is the only player to win the Sony Open in Hawaii and Hyundai Tournament of Champions back-to-back in the same season.
- Ten of last 16 Sony Open winners have played the week prior at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions.
- The last player to record his first PGA TOUR victory at the Sony Open was Russell Henley (2013).
- The last player to win the event in his first try was Russell Henley (2013); prior to that was Bruce Lietzke ('77).
- Nine players have made the Sony Open their first PGA TOUR win: Ted Makalena (1966), Grier Jones (1972), John Schlee (1973), Gary Groh (1975), Isao Aoki (1983), David Ishii (1990), John Morse (1995), Jerry Kelly (2002), Russell Henley (2013).
- Russell Henley (2013) holds the 72-hole record at the Sony Open, with his 256 breaking the tournament scoring mark of 260 set by John Huston in 1998 and matched by Brad Faxon in 2001.
- Henley also holds the 36-hole record at the Sony Open in Hawaii (14-under-par 126). It broke the record of 12-under-par 128 set in 1994 by Davis Love III and matched by John Huston (1998), Paul Azinger (2000), Brad Faxon (2001) and John Cook (2002).
- Nine players have won each of the PGA TOUR's Hawaii events at least once: Jim Furyk (1996 Sony; 2001 Tournament of Champions), Jack Nicklaus (1974 Sony; 1963-64, 1971, 1973, 1977 TOC); Lee Trevino (1968 Sony; 1981 TOC); Lanny Wadkins (1988, 1991 Sony Open, 1982-83 TOC); Paul Azinger (1991 Sony; 1990 TOC); Mark O'Meara (1985 Sony; 1996 TOC); Ernie Els (2003-04 Sony; 2003 TOC); Vijay Singh (2005 Sony; 2007 TOC), Zach Johnson (2009 Sony; 2014 TOC).

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- In the last nine years (since 2006), six of the 54-hole leaders/co-leaders have gone on to capture the Sony Open in Hawaii. The following details the last nine years at this event:

Year	54-hole leader/Score	Eventual Champion/Score
2014	Chris Kirk (198/-12)	Jimmy Walker (263/-17)
2013	<b>Russell Henley</b> /Scott Langley (193/-17)	Henley (256/-24)
2012	Jeff Maggert, Matt Every (198/-12)	Johnson Wagner (267/-13)
2011	<b>Mark Wilson</b> (197/-13)	Wilson (264/-16)
2010	<b>Ryan Palmer</b> /Robert Allenby (199/-11)	Palmer (265/-15)
2009	<b>Zach Johnson</b> (200/-10)	Johnson (265/-15)
2008	<b>K.J. Choi</b> (195/-15)	Choi (266/-14)
2007	Charles Howell III (197/-13)	Paul Goydos (266/-14)
2006	<b>David Toms</b> /Chad Campbell (196/-14)	Toms (261/-19)

### The Sony Open in Hawaii and the FedExCup

The Sony Open in Hawaii enters the second season featuring a wraparound schedule that bridges two years with 47 events. The 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season included seven events during the fall of 2014, all of which will awarded FedExCup points. After a seven-week break, the season resumed last week at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions and resumes this week for the Sony Open, marking the traditional swing through Hawaii before moving to the West Coast. The FedExCup Playoffs once again features four events and concludes in September 2015 with the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola and the crowning of the FedExCup champion.

Every week is significant in the race for the FedExCup – four of the six winners from the fall calendar of 2013 (Jimmy Walker, Chris Kirk, Dustin Johnson, Webb Simpson) qualified for the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola and two others (Harris English, Ryan Moore) finished inside the top 40.

### Miscellaneous 2014-15 PGA TOUR notes

- Entering the 2014-15 season, 29 of the top 30 players in the Official World Golf Ranking were PGA TOUR members, including 2014-15 new members Victor Dubuisson and Jamie Donaldson. Thomas Bjorn (30) is the lone non-member inside the top 30.
- The 2014-15 rookie class of 24 players includes 21 players under the age of 30. The list of 24 includes three players playing on medical extensions from previous years but remain in the rookie category.
- Four new members earned PGA TOUR cards through the non-member FedExCup points list but are not considered part of the rookie class: Victor Dubuisson (France); Francesco Molinari (Italy); Jamie Donaldson (Wales); and Brooks Koepka (United States).
- There are 86 active international players representing 24 countries in 2014-15. Australia has the most international members (16).

### 2013-14 year in review

- Billy Horschel, thanks to victories at the two final FedExCup Playoff events, became the youngest winner of the FedExCup at the age of 27 years, 9 months and 7 days.
- Rory McIlroy, winner of three events including back-to-back majors (The Open Championship and PGA Championship), was voted the PGA TOUR Player of the Year. McIlroy also captured the Arnold Palmer Award as the leader in official earnings and the Byron Nelson Trophy for lowest adjusted scoring average.
- Chesson Hadley, winner of the Puerto Rico Open presented by seepuertorico.com, was voted the PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year.
- Sixteen different players under the age of 30 won on TOUR in 2013-14, accounting for a total of 22 of the 45 events. The last time there were 16 winners under the age of 30 in a season was 2011, with a total of 18 wins.
- Jimmy Walker held the top spot in the FedExCup rankings for 36 of 37 weeks in 2013-14, including a record 30 straight weeks starting with his Sony Open in Hawaii win. Billy Horschel won the FedExCup thanks to victories at the last two FedExCup Playoff events, the BMW Championship and TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola.

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- There were no repeat winners in 2013-14, the last being Tiger Woods who won the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by MasterCard back-to-back in 2012 and 2013. Ian Poulter came closest, finishing second in the defense of his World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions title.
- 25 of the 45 PGA TOUR events in 2013-14 were decided by one stroke (19) or a playoff (6).
- Hunter Mahan is the only player to qualify for the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola every year since the inception of the FedExCup in 2007. Over the eight years, Mahan is also the only player to play in every FedExCup Playoff event (32).

**Notable changes for the 2014-15 PGA TOUR season:**

- Starting in January 2015, winners of the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by MasterCard and the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide will receive a three-year PGA TOUR exemption and a three-year exemption into THE PLAYERS Championship.
- The 2015 Presidents Cup team eligibility for the U.S. Team will be based on FedExCup points instead of money. Presidents Cup points for the FedExCup Playoffs will be weighted the same as World Golf Championships (550 for first place, 315 for second, etc.).
- The Top 125 Money List from the previous season, established following the conclusion of the 2014 Wyndham Championship, will remain as an exempt category in 2014-15 for standard, open events only.
- The Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation and the RBC Heritage will include the Top 10 from the Previous Tournament Category.

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