



## 2015 The Honda Classic

*(The 15th of 43 events in the PGA TOUR Season)*

**Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.**

**Feb. 26 - March 1, 2014**

**Purse: \$6,100,000 (\$1,098,000/winner)**

**PGA National (Champion Course)**

**Par/Yards: 35-35—70/7,140**

### First-Round Notes – Friday, February 28, 2014

*Weather: Mostly cloudy, with a high of 86 degrees. Winds W/SW 15-25 mph.*

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

Jim Herman	65 (-5)
Brendan Steele	66 (-4)
Martin Flores	67 (-3)
Padraig Harrington	67 (-3)
Patrick Reed	67 (-3)

#### **Jim Herman**

Jim Herman, who got into this week's Honda Classic field when Scott Verplank withdrew early in the week, made five birdies and no bogeys en route to a 5-under 65. Herman birdied two of his last three holes, Nos. 16 and 18, on his way to the bogey-free score.

Since 1980, only four players have won The Honda Classic in their first attempt; Tim Herron (1996), Matt Kuchar (2002), Todd Hamilton (2004) and Padraig Harrington (2005). Mark Wilson (2005) and Michael Thompson (2013) are the only United States natives to win since 2005.

Twelve players have made The Honda Classic their first career TOUR title. Since 2000, five players have achieved the feat; Matt Kuchar (2002), Padraig Harrington (2005), Mark Wilson (2007), Y.E. Yang (2009) and Michael Thompson (2013).

Herman, who now resides in Palm City, Fla., is making his first start in The Honda Classic this week.

Herman is making his 11<sup>th</sup> start of the season and remains in search of his first top-10 finish. His best showing is T18 at the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open.

In 75 previous stats on the PGA TOUR, Herman's best finish is a T9 at the 2013 Sanderson Farms Championship.

Herman has previously never held a position higher than T3 after any round on the PGA TOUR.

#### **First-Round Lead Notes**

Since 2000, the only players to convert an 18-hole lead/co-lead into victory at The Honda Classic were Dudley Hart (2000), Jesper Parnevik (2001) and Justin Leonard (2003).

Through 14 events on the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season, the only first-round leader/co-leader to parlay that position into a win was Sang-Moon Bae at the Frys.com Open in the season-opening event.

After 18 holes last year, Rory McIlroy led by one with a 7-under 63, the lowest opening-round score in the event since moving to PGA National in 2007. The record for lowest opening-round score in the event belongs to Tim Herron, who posted a 10-under 62 en route to his 1996 victory at the par-72 TPC Eagle Trace.

The highest 18-hole lead at The Honda Classic since 2007 was Spencer Levin's 3-under 67 in 2011.

#### **Brendan Steele**

Making his fifth-consecutive start at The Honda Classic, Brendan Steele's 4-under 66 is just his fourth of 17, sub-par scores in the event. Steele has never missed a cut in the event, but has also never broken par in either weekend round.



Steele is looking for his second career TOUR win this week, having previously won the 2011 Valero Texas Open.

Steele is making his eighth start of the season this week, with a T2 at the Humana Challenge his lone top 10. He is coming off T14 honors at last week's Northern Trust Open, thanks to back-to-back 69s on the weekend.

#### **Martin Flores**

Making his 11<sup>th</sup> start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season, Texas native Martin Flores is looking to right his season's ship. Still in search of his first top-20 finish, Flores' best showing this season is a T46 at the Waste Management Phoenix Open.

Flores is making his fifth start at The Honda Classic this week, with a T12 last year his best showing.

Flores comes to PGA National this week in search of his first PGA TOUR win in his 121<sup>st</sup> start. His best finish came at last year's Wells Fargo Championship, where he finished third.

#### **Padraig Harrington**

Playing on a sponsor exemption, 2005 Honda Classic champion Padraig Harrington is making his seventh start in the event, and is coming off a missed cut last year.

Following his first TOUR win at The Honda Classic in 2005, Harrington went on to win the 2005 Barclays, 2007-2008 Open Championship and 2008 PGA Championship. The 2015 Honda Classic marks his 119<sup>th</sup> start since that last victory at Oakland Hills Country Club.

Harrington has made three cuts in eight starts this season, with a T56 at last week's Northern Trust Open being his best finish.

Harrington is in search of first top-10 finish since a T10 at the 2013 FedEx St. Jude Classic.

Harrington's first-round scoring average this year, 70.38, is nearly three strokes lower than his next best (R2/73).

#### **Daniel Berger**

PGA TOUR rookie and Jupiter, Fla. resident Daniel Berger is making his first start in The Honda Classic.

With today's 2-under 68, Berger has now posted 20 scores of par-or-better in his last 21 rounds (77/R3/ Farmers Insurance Open).

Berger, the 21-year-old former Florida State University Seminole, is making his 11<sup>th</sup> start of the season, where he has collected top-10 finishes at the Waste Management Phoenix Open and AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, both T10s.

En route to his 28<sup>th</sup>-place finish on last year's Web.com Tour priority list, Berger claimed five top-10 finishes, highlighted by a T2 at the Stonebrae Classic.

#### **Phil Mickelson**

Following a bogey at his first hole of the day, No. 10, Phil Mickelson could manage no better than a 1-over 71 in round one.

Should Mickelson miss tomorrow's cut, it would mark the first time to miss the cut in the same event in successive years since the PLAYERS Championship in 2013 and 2014.

Mickelson is making his second-consecutive Honda Classic start and fifth overall (1995/MC, 2001/T27, 2002/T11, 2014/MC)

This marks Mickelson's fourth start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season (Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation/T24, Waste Management Phoenix Open/MC and Farmers Insurance Open/MC).

Mickelson is in search of first PGA TOUR top 10 since his runner-up finish at the 2014 PGA Championship.



Since 1993, Mickelson has recorded at least one win each year, except for 1999, 2003, and 2014.

### **Rory McIlroy**

Rory McIlroy's double bogey at the first hole today en route to a 3-over 73 was his worst start to a PGA TOUR event since taking a triple-bogey seven at the first hole in round one of the 2013 BMW Championship.

McIlroy followed his double bogey at the first hole with another at the par-3 fifth hole. The last time McIlroy made two or more double bogeys in a round was in the second round of last year's Memorial Tournament, when he double-bogeyed hole Nos. 13-15 en route to a 6-over 78.

Friends Rory McIlroy & Scott Pinckney played together previously at the 2012 Open Championship at Royal Lytham & St. Annes (Rory McIlroy/T60, Scott Pinckney/MC) and 2011 US Open at Congressional (Rory McIlroy/Won, Scott Pinckney/MC as an amateur).

### **Russell Henley**

Defending Honda Classic champion Russell Henley got off to a tough start at PGA National, opening with a 3-over 73, his highest of nine scores in the event. Henley closed with a 2-over 72 at PGA National last year.

Following last week's 6-over 77 in the final round of the Northern Trust Open, Henley is now 9-over in his last two competitive rounds on the PGA TOUR.

Henley is 4-under in nine career rounds on the Bear Trap (Nos. 15-17). He made par on each of the three holes in round one today.

### **Miscellaneous Notes**

Four of the world's top-10 ranked players are competing at this year's Honda Classic:

Player	OWGR	R1 Score/Pos.
Rory McIlroy	1	73/T79
Sergio Garcia	6	72/T61
Justin Rose	8	73/T79
Martin Kaymer	10	68/T6

The week of The Honda Classic offers the final opportunity to qualify for the following week's World Golf Championships event, the Cadillac Championship down the road at Trump National Doral. Players not previously eligible can qualify by being inside the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking (players inside the top 50 in the OWGR as of 2/23/15 cannot drop out) or the top 10 or the FedExCup standings following The Honda Classic.

Louis Oosthuizen withdrew prior to the first round with neck spasms. Mark Hubbard replaced him in the field. Hubbard was subsequently disqualified after his round of 4-over 74 for failing to register before he teed off. Mike Weir withdrew during the first round, citing an injury, and Chris Stroud withdrew following his round.

Scoring Averages at the par-70 PGA National:

	<b>Front 9</b>	<b>Back 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
Thursday	35.690	36.592	72.282	---

First-round scoring average at PGA National: 2007 (72.838), 2008 (72.126), 2009 (72.378), 2010 (72.406), 2011 (73.875), 2012 (70.889), 2013 (70.147), 2014 (70.406) and 2015 (72.282).

Morning scoring average – 71.67

Afternoon scoring average – 72.92

The par-4 11<sup>th</sup> hole played the toughest during the first round, yielding a 4.13 average, with the par-5 18<sup>th</sup> hole (4.393) being the easiest.

"Bear Trap" averages – No. 15 (3.169/11<sup>th</sup> toughest), No. 16 (4.070/13<sup>th</sup> toughest), No. 17 (3.239/4<sup>th</sup> toughest).

Bogey-free Rounds:

R1: Jim Herman (65), Daniel Berger (68).