



On-site PGA TOUR media contact:

Doug Milne, PGA TOUR Media Official
(904) 614-0657 | dougmilne@pgatourhq.com

2015 Valero Texas Open pre-tournament notes

Dates: March 23-29, 2015

Where: San Antonio, Texas

Course: TPC San Antonio

Par/Yardage: 36-36--72/7,435 yards

Field size: 144

2014 champion: Steven Bowditch

Purse: \$6,200,000 (\$1,116,000/winner)

FedExCup: 500 points to the winner

Format: 72-hole stroke play

Twitter: @valerotxopen

Steven Bowditch at the 2014 Valero Texas Open

In 2014, Australia's Steven Bowditch headed into the final round with a three-stroke lead over Matt Kuchar and Andrew Loupe. Despite a 4-over 76 on Sunday, Bowditch earned his first career PGA TOUR title with a one-shot victory over Will MacKenzie and Daniel Summerhays at 8-under 280 in his 110th start on the PGA TOUR. His win was sandwiched between victories by fellow Aussies, making it three straight tournaments won by an Australian: John Senden (Valspar Championship), Steven Bowditch (Valero Texas Open) and Matt Jones (Shell Houston Open).

More on Steven Bowditch

- Following his win in San Antonio last year, Bowditch claimed the second-to-last "win and you're in" spot in the Masters field two weeks later, where he finished T26.
- Bowditch made it through the first three events in the FedExCup Playoffs events and ended the season ranked 59th in the standings.
- In 11 stroke-play starts so far this season, Bowditch has collected one top-10 finish at the season-opening Frys.com Open, where he finished second two strokes behind Sangmoon Bae.

Valero Texas Open and the Masters

The Valero Texas Open is one of the final opportunities for players not exempt for the Masters to play their way into the year's first major championship. The winner of the Valero Texas Open, if not already exempt, will punch his ticket to Augusta. Additionally, the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking through the Valero Texas Open are exempt as well. Not currently eligible, Harris English is lurking at No. 52 and hopes to play his way to the Masters with a strong performance at TPC San Antonio.

Notes on the field

- Sixteen of the top 30 in the FedExCup standings
- Thirteen of the top 30 in the Official World Golf Ranking
- Seven winners in 2014-15: Sangmoon Bae (Frys.com Open), Jimmy Walker (Sony Open in Hawaii), James Hahn (Valero Texas Open), Dustin Johnson (World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship), Alex Cejka (Puerto Rico Open), Jordan Spieth (Valspar Championship) and Matt Every (Arnold Palmer Invitational).
- After a season that included three wins and a berth on his first Ryder Cup team, San Antonio resident Jimmy Walker successfully defended his title earlier this year at the Sony Open Hawaii. Walker will be making his 10th start in the Valero Texas Open this year, with a T3 in 2010 his best finish.
- Valspar Championship winner Jordan Spieth will make his fourth consecutive start in this week's Valero Texas Open. The former Texas Longhorn finished T41 in 2012 as an amateur, missed the cut in 2013 and finished 10th last year. With his playoff win at the Valspar Championship, Spieth became the fourth different player since 1940 to win twice on the PGA TOUR before reaching their 22nd birthday: Tiger Woods, Sergio Garcia and Robert Gamez.

- Forty-two time PGA TOUR winner and World Golf Hall of Fame Member Phil Mickelson will make his third start. Among his 42 TOUR wins are four from the state of Texas (1996 HP Byron Nelson Championship, 2000/2008 Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial and 2011 Shell Houston Open). Mickelson's most recent win on TOUR was the 2013 Open Championship, his fifth major championship.
- Matt Every, who overcame a three-stroke deficit in the final round at last week's Arnold Palmer Invitational with a 6-under 66, successfully defended his title at Bay Hill. Every sank a 17-foot birdie putt on the 72nd hole to secure the win, making him the first player to make his first two victories on the PGA TOUR come in the same event in successive years since Boo Weekley (2007-2008 RBC Heritage). Every will be making his fourth start in this week's Valero Texas Open, where he finished T2 in 2012. Every posted a 9-under 63 in round one that year, one stroke shy of his career low.
- Dustin Johnson, who claimed his ninth career PGA TOUR win last month at the World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship, is poised to make his fourth start at the Valero Texas Open but his first since the event moved to TPC San Antonio. Johnson now has at least one win on TOUR in the last eight consecutive seasons, the longest streak on TOUR. Johnson made his PGA TOUR debut in 2007 at the Valero Texas Open as a sponsor invite.
- James Hahn, a first-time winner at the Northern Trust Open earlier this year, makes his first start since his victory at Riviera Country Club, and returns to competition for the first time after the birth of his first child, Kailee.
- Jim Furyk comes to San Antonio in search of his first win since the 2010 TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola, which clinched the season-long FedExCup title. Since that 2010 victory, Furyk has collected 31 top-10 finishes including seven runner-up finishes.
- Billy Horschel followed a T2 at last season's Deutsche Bank Championship with victories the ensuing two weeks at the BMW Championship and TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola en route to winning the FedExCup title. Of his four previous starts in San Antonio, Horschel's best finish is a T3 in 2013.
- Seven-time PGA TOUR champion Matt Kuchar is scheduled to make his 11th start at the Valero Texas Open this week. So far this year, Kuchar has collected top 10s at the Sony Open in Hawaii (T3) and Humana Challenge (T2).
- Former World No. 1 and reigning U.S. Open and PLAYERS champion Martin Kaymer will make his first start at the Valero Texas Open.
- 2014 AJGA Rolex Junior Player of the Year and future LSU Tiger Sam Burns will make his first start on the PGA TOUR, via a sponsor exemption for winning the Junior PGA Championship in 2014.
- Ryan Polzin, Head Professional at Royal Oaks in Houston, is in this week's after winning the Southern Texas PGA Championship. He is joined by close friend and Alamo Golf Club head pro Randy Jones, who caddied for him at the 2013 PGA Championship. Jones is facing his second battle with Melanoma Cancer. He was first diagnosed four years ago, but was cancer-free for several years following treatment. Polzin will wear a purple pin to raise awareness in honor of his friend's plight.

Drive to \$100 million

Together with the Benefit for Children, the Valero Texas Open has raised \$95 million for local and regional charities - \$90.5 million of that since 2002 when Valero became the tournament's title sponsor. The Valero Texas Open's "Drive to \$100 million" campaign to help promote the tournament's charitable giving efforts is likely to reach fruition at this year's event.

Tournament notes

- Players in the Valero Texas Open with Texas collegiate connections:
 - University of Texas – Jordan Spieth, Harrison Frazar, Justin Leonard, Jhonattan Vegas
 - TCU – J.J. Henry
 - Lamar University – Chris Stroud
 - Texas Lutheran University – Cameron Beckman
 - Texas A&M – Ryan Palmer
 - Baylor University – Jimmy Walker
- 2015 marks the sixth consecutive year of the Valero Texas Open is at TPC San Antonio Oaks Course. TPC San Antonio was designed by Greg Norman, with Sergio Garcia as design consultant.
- Since 1970, there have only been four international winners of the Valero Texas Open, three of whom emerged since 2010: Steven Bowditch (2014), Martin Laird (2013), Adam Scott (2010) and Nick Price, who in 1992 defeated Steve Elkington in sudden death at Oak Hills CC.
- Dating back to 1922, Valero Texas Open is the third-oldest non-major on the PGA TOUR calendar behind only the BMW Championship (1899) and RBC Canadian Open (1904). It's also the longest-running event on the PGA TOUR to be held in the same city.

2014-15 PGA TOUR Season Highlights

Through 19 events in the 2014-15 season, there has yet to be a multiple winner this season on TOUR, the longest such streak since 1994 when Nick Price won his second event (Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial) in the 21st event of the campaign.

So far in the 2015 calendar year, seven of the 12 winners were in the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking at the time of their respective victories: Patrick Reed (23), Jimmy Walker (17), Bill Haas (41), Brooks Koepka (33), Jason Day (8), Dustin Johnson (16) and Jordan Spieth (10).

Through the Valspar Championship, eight of the 19 events have been determined by a playoff. The Valspar Championship, won by Jordan Spieth, marked the fourth consecutive week with a playoff finish following the Northern Trust Open, The Honda Classic and the Puerto Rico Open.

The trend of young winners on TOUR has continued early into the 2014-15 season as eight of the 19 winners have been under the age of 30. Among the eight players are:

- 24-year-old Patrick Reed, who became just the fifth player since 1991 to win four times before the age of 25, joining Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Rory McIlroy and Sergio Garcia with his victory at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions.
- 21-year-old Jordan Spieth, with his win at the Valspar Championship, became the fourth different player since 1940 to win twice on the PGA TOUR before reaching their 22nd birthday. The others were Tiger Woods, Sergio Garcia and Robert Gamez.

The rookie class of 24 players including 21 under the age of 30, is off to a strong start, led by Canadian Nick Taylor, a 2013 graduate of the PGA TOUR Canada and a 2014 graduate of the Web.com Tour. Taylor won the Sanderson Farms Championship in October and sits 39th in the FedExCup standings. Other rookies members in the top 50 in the FedExCup standings include Daniel Berger (19), Justin Thomas (37) and Tony Finau (41).

Jimmy Walker, who led the FedExCup standings for 36 of the 37 events prior to last year's FedExCup Playoffs, continues his upwards trend. Walker was a repeat winner at the Sony Open in Hawaii in January and leads the FedExCup standings.

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.