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2015 Valspar Championship pre-tournament notes

Dates: March 9-15, 2015

Where: Palm Harbor, Fla.

Course: Innisbrook, A Salamander Golf & Spa Resort (Copperhead)

36-35—par 71/7,340 yards

Field size: 156

2014 champion: John Senden

Purse: \$5,900,000 (\$1,062,000/winner)

FedExCup: 500 points to the winner

Format: 72-hole stroke play

Twitter: @valsparchamp

How John Senden won the 2014 Valspar Championship

Having started the final round two strokes back at 6-under, John Senden birdied two of the last three holes to distance himself from a crowded leaderboard and win by one stroke over Kevin Na. Senden was tied for the lead after making bogey at the 15th hole, but pitched in from 70 feet for an improbable birdie at the par-4 16th and then made a short birdie putt at the par-3 17th that proved to be the winner. His victory ended a victory drought of nearly seven years, dating to the 2006 John Deere Classic.

More on John Senden

- ✓ Following his win in Palm Harbor last year, Senden went on to claim three more top-10 finishes last season, including T8 honors at the Masters three starts later. He added top-5 finishes at the Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial (T5) and Deutsche Bank Championship (T5), en route to 23rd-place in the FedExCup standings.
- ✓ So far this season, Senden has claimed one top-10 finish in eight starts (7th/CIMB Classic).

Notes on the field

- ✓ Seven of the top 15 in the Official World Golf Ranking, including Henrik Stenson (3), Adam Scott (5) and Jim Furyk (6):
 - Henrik Stenson, winner of the 2013 FedExCup title, will be making just his third start of the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season this week. He finished T24 at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions in November and is coming off a T4 at last week's WGC-Cadillac Championship. Stenson is making his first start in the Valspar Championship.
 - Former World No. 1 Adam Scott is poised to make his sixth start in this week's Valspar Championship. His best finish in the event is T28 in 2010. An 11-time winner on TOUR, Scott is looking for his first victory since last year's playoff win at the Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial. This week's Valspar Championship is just his third start on TOUR this season. Scott finished T12 at the WGC-HSBC Champions last Fall and earned T4 honors at last week's WGC-Cadillac Championship with Stenson.
 - En route to winning the 2010 FedExCup title, Furyk claimed his 14th career PGA TOUR victory at the Valspar Championship. It was his first of three wins on TOUR in 2010 (RBC Heritage, TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola). Furyk joined an elite group at the 2013 BMW Championship when he posted a second-round, 12-under 59 at Conway Farms Golf Club. The only others to post the elusive score on the PGA TOUR are Al Geiberger, Chip Beck, David Duval, Paul Goydos and Stuart Appleby. Furyk claimed 11 top-10 finishes in 2014 on TOUR, earning him fourth-place honors in the FedExCup standings. Furyk has collected one top ten in three starts so far this year (T7/AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am). Furyk will be making his eighth start in the Valspar Championship this week, and seventh consecutive. In addition to his 2010 win on the Copperhead Course, his other top-10 finishes are a T7 in 2013 and a T2 in 2012.
- ✓ Ten of the top 20 in the current FedExCup standings, including four of the top 10: Sangmoon Bae (5), Patrick Reed (7), Charley Hoffman (8) and Brandt Snedeker (9). Each of those four have already claimed

a TOUR victory this season; Bae (Frys.com Open), Hoffman (OHL Classic at Mayakoba), Reed (Hyundai Tournament of Champions) and Snedeker (AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am). UPDATE

- ✓ Other notables include 2013 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year Jordan Spieth, recent winner at The Honda Classic Padraig Harrington, Honda Classic runner-up and TOUR rookie Daniel Berger and the world's top-ranked amateur, Ollie Schniederjans:
 - The 21-year-old Spieth returns to the event which opened many doors for him in 2013. By virtue of his T7 finish at the 2013 Valspar Championship, Spieth earned Temporary Membership for the remainder of the season. He went on to become the youngest winner on TOUR since 1931 with his victory at the John Deere Classic, tied for most top 10s on TOUR (nine), played in all four FedExCup Playoff events, was a Captain's selection for the U.S. Presidents Cup team and was voted PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year. In the 2013-14 PGA TOUR Season, Spieth collected eight top-10 finishes, highlighted by a share of second place at the Masters, a T4 at the PLAYERS Championship and a T5 at the WGC-Dell Match Play Championship. Spieth has finished inside the top-7 in half of the six TOUR events he has played; T7/Waste Management Phoenix Open, T7/AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am and T4/Northern Trust Open.
 - Padraig Harrington broke a winless drought of nearly seven years with his recent playoff victory over Daniel Berger at The Honda Classic two weeks ago. Harrington began the final round at PGA National three strokes behind leader Ian Poulter. When Poulter faltered down the stretch, Harrington's even-par 70 was good enough to force sudden death with the 21-year-old Jupiter, Fla. native. Harrington managed the score of 70 thanks to a clutch, 16-foot birdie putt on the 72nd hole. Following a pair of pars back at the par-5 18th, Harrington won with a par on the second extra hole, the par-3 17th. The win was Harrington's sixth on the PGA TOUR. Among them are titles at the 2007-2008 Open Championship and 2008 PGA Championship. Harrington, originally offered a sponsor exemption into the Valspar Championship, will be making his fifth start in the event, with a T8 in his first start of 2010 his best showing. Interestingly, the sponsor exemption freed up by Harrington's win went to Jonathan Byrd, who holds the distinction making more cuts on the Copperhead Course than anyone (11).
 - Florida native and PGA TOUR rookie Daniel Berger's playoff loss to Harrington two weeks ago at The Honda Classic was his third top-10 finish in his last four starts (T10/Waste Management Phoenix Open, T10/AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am and 2nd/The Honda Classic). Making his first start at the Valspar Championship, Berger comes into the week leading the rookie class in FedExCup standings at No. 17
 - Playing on a sponsor exemption, Georgia Tech All-American Ollie Schniederjans will make his PGA TOUR debut at this week's Valspar Championship. In his only start on the Web.com Tour, Schniederjans finished T5 as an amateur at the Air Capital Classic last year. Schniederjans took over the world's No. 1 spot after Patrick Rodgers and Matthew Fitzpatrick turned professional after last year's U.S. Open.

Tournament notes

- ✓ 2014 marked the beginning of a new era for the tournament, with the title sponsorship role of Valspar. Based in Minneapolis, the Valspar Corporation is an international manufacturer of paint and coatings. With upwards of 10,000 employees in 25 countries, the Valspar Corporation is the sixth-largest paint and coating distributor in the world.
- ✓ Six of the last seven winners of the Valspar Championship have all finished the season of their win inside the top 30 in FedExCup standings, highlighted by Jim Furyk winning the FedExCup title in 2010, the year of his win at Innisbrook Resort. 2013's winner Kevin Streelman finished the season at No. 44.
- ✓ Brian Gay is the only player to compete in all previous 14 Valspar Championships. His best finish is a T4 in 2007. Gay will vie for this year's title for a 15th consecutive time.
- ✓ K.J. Choi (2002 and 2006) and Retief Goosen (2003 and 2009) are the only multiple winners of the Valspar Championship and both are in this year's field. Choi nearly won for a third time, finishing runner-up to Jim Furyk in 2010. No player has yet to successfully defend his title at the Valspar Championship.

Year	Defending Champion	Finish
2014	Kevin Streelman	T38
2013	Luke Donald	T4
2012	Gary Woodland	T29
2011	Jim Furyk	T13
2010	Retief Goosen	5 th
2009	Sean O'Hair	MC
2008	Mark Calcavecchia	T14
2007	K.J. Choi	T6
2006	Carl Pettersson	MC
2005	Vijay Singh	MC
2004	Retief Goosen	T20
2003	K.J. Choi	T40
2002	John Huston (won 2000 event)	T13

TOUR Trends

- ✓ Seven of the nine winners in 2015 through The Honda Classic were inside the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking at the time of their victory. With his win at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, Brandt Snedeker, jumped from 63rd to 31st in the Official World Golf Ranking. At The Honda Classic, Pdraig Harrington moved from No. 297 to 82nd.
- ✓ Four rookies sit among the top 50 in the FedExCup standings through the WGC-Cadillac Championship: Daniel Berger (17), Tony Finau (36), Nick Taylor (41) and Justin Thomas (45).
- ✓ Jimmy Walker, after leading the FedExCup standings for 36 of 37 weeks last year, took the lead in the 2014-15 FedExCup standings after winning the Sony Open in Hawaii and has held onto the lead for eight consecutive weeks through the WGC-Cadillac Championship.

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) was 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).

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 included the Top 10 from the Previous Tournament Category, as will the RBC Heritage.
- ✓ Eight of the 13 different winners in 2013-14 were under the age of 30: Webb Simpson/Shriners Hospitals for Children Open, Chris Kirk/The McGladrey Classic, Dustin Johnson/WGC-HSBC Champions, Harris English/ OHL Classic at Mayakoba, Patrick Reed/Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation, Scott Stallings/Farmers Insurance Open, Jason Day/World Golf Championships-Accenture Match Play Championship and Russell Henley/The Honda Classic.