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2016 Safeway Open Pre-Tournament Notes

Dates: October 10-16, 2016

Where: Silverado Resort & Spa (North Course), Napa, Calif.

Par/Yards: 36-36--72/7,203 yards

Field: 144

2015 champion: Emiliano Grillo

Purse: \$6,000,000/\$1,080,000 (winner)

FedExCup: 500 points (winner)

Format: 72-hole stroke play

Website: safewayopen.com

Facebook: [facebook/safewayopen](https://www.facebook.com/safewayopen)

Twitter: @safewayopen

A look at the 2015 Safeway Open

In his first start as a member of the PGA TOUR, and seventh overall TOUR start, Argentina's Emiliano Grillo played his weekend rounds at Silverado Resort & Spa in 10-under (65-69) before defeating Kevin Na with a birdie-4 on the second playoff hole (No. 18). In doing so, he became the first player to win in his first start as a PGA TOUR member since Russell Henley at the 2013 Sony Open in Hawaii.

More on Emiliano Grillo

Following his win early in the 2015-16 PGA TOUR Season, Grillo ended his season strong, collecting additional top-10 finishes in the FedExCup Playoffs at The Barclays (T2) and TOUR Championship (T10). He became just the ninth rookie to qualify for the TOUR Championship in the FedExCup era dating back to 2007, and he was also the third straight winner of the Safeway Open to qualify for the TOUR Championship.

Grillo also represented Argentina in the Men's Olympics Golf. Grillo posted rounds of 70-69-68-70—277 (-7) in Rio to finish T8. A native of Argentina, he enters the 2016-17 season sixth in the International Team standings for the 2017 Presidents Cup to be played at Liberty National Golf Club next October.

Safeway Open and the FedExCup

This week, the PGA TOUR begins its fourth season featuring a wraparound schedule that bridges two years with 47 events. The 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season kicks off with the Safeway Open and includes seven events during the fall of 2016, all of which will award FedExCup points. After a seven week break, the season will resume in January with the traditional swing through Hawaii before moving to the West Coast. The FedExCup Playoffs once again features four events and concludes in September 2017 with the TOUR Championship and the crowning of the FedExCup champion.

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Every week is significant in the race for the FedExCup – four of the seven winners from the fall calendar of 2015 (Grillo, Justin Thomas, Russell Knox and Kevin Kisner) qualified for the TOUR Championship and two others (Smylie Kaufman and Graeme McDowell) finished inside the top 50.

PGA TOUR returns to Silverado Resort & Spa

The PGA TOUR returns to Silverado Resort & Spa's North Course this week for the third straight year of the Safeway Open. Silverado also hosted a TOUR event from 1968-1980, contested as the Kaiser International Open Invitational from 1968-1976 and the Anheuser-Busch Golf Classic from 1977-1980. Among an impressive list of winners at that event are two-time winner/current Safeway Open host Johnny Miller (1974-75), Jack Nicklaus (1969), Ben Crenshaw (1980) and Tom Watson (1978). In addition, PGA TOUR Champions hosted an event at Silverado from 1989-2002.

Notables in the Field

Phil Mickelson

- Poised to make his second start in the Safeway Open (MC/2007), Phil Mickelson is coming off his best season since 2013. This past season, he amassed six top-10 finishes, half of which were runner-up showings (AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, FedEx St. Jude Classic and The Open Championship).
- Two weeks ago, Mickelson competed in his 11th consecutive Ryder Cup, where he was instrumental in America's 17-11 victory over Europe. Mickelson went 2-1-1 for the week and made nine birdies in Sunday's Singles to halve his match with Sergio Garcia.
- Prior to the Ryder Cup, Mickelson competed in his eighth TOUR Championship in the FedExCup era and first since 2013.
- Of his 42 career PGA TOUR wins, the California native has won 11 in the state of California.

Paul Casey

- England's Paul Casey enjoyed a career-best season in 2015-16 on the PGA TOUR, having collected seven top-10 finishes in 22 starts. Of those top-10s, he finished alone in second in back-to-back weeks in the FedExCup Playoffs at the Deutsche Bank Championship and BMW Championship. At the season-ending finale, the TOUR Championship, he finished fourth to end his season ranked a career-best fifth in the FedExCup standings.
- In Casey's only other start in the Safeway Open, he finished T7 in 2011 at CordeValle GC.
- Casey will be in search of his second career win on the PGA TOUR this week and first since the 2009 Shell Houston Open.

Matt Kuchar

- Poised to make his second start in the Safeway Open (T21/2015), Matt Kuchar is coming off a PGA TOUR season defined by 10 top-10 finishes in 26 starts and a fourth consecutive Ryder Cup appearance.
- Kuchar's T15 finish at the TOUR Championship last month marked his seventh consecutive start in the FedExCup Playoffs finale.
- Kuchar is in search of his eighth career PGA TOUR win and first since the 2014 RBC Heritage.

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A broader look at the field

- Eight players that qualified for the 2016 TOUR Championship.
- Multiple members of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR rookie class, including Wesley Bryan, a three-time winner on the Web.com Tour in 2016.
- Sponsor invites include 2016 NCAA Champion Aaron Wise of the University of Oregon, who turned professional last summer and finished fourth on the PGA TOUR – Mackenzie Tour Order of Merit on the strength of a win at the Syncrude Oil Country Championship presented by AECON.

2015-16 FedExCup Notes

- The four winners of the FedExCup Playoffs events in 2016 were all inside the top 15 in the Official World Golf Ranking: Patrick Reed (The Barclays/14), Rory McIlroy (Deutsche Bank Championship/5), Dustin Johnson (BMW Championship/2) and McIlroy (TOUR Championship/3).
- 2016 FedExCup champion Rory McIlroy made history as he surpassed Tiger Woods for the most all-time FedExCup Playoffs wins, becoming the first player to capture four Playoffs titles with wins at the Deutsche Bank Championship and TOUR Championship.
- Rory McIlroy, who entered the TOUR Championship at No. 6 in the FedExCup standings, became the third FedExCup champion who ranked outside the top five heading into the TOUR Championship, joining Jim Furyk (2010) and Bill Haas (2011).
- Dating to the 2014 Deutsche Bank Championship, 10 of the 11 winners in the FedExCup Playoffs have been under the age of 30.
- During the 10th season of the FedExCup, a record 11 different players (Emiliano Grillo, Smylie Kaufman, Justin Thomas, Russell Knox, Kevin Kisner, Brandt Snedeker, Adam Scott, Jason Day, Dustin Johnson, Patrick Reed and Rory McIlroy) held the lead in the FedExCup standings this season, with Day holding the lead the longest period, a total of 11 weeks.
- Adam Scott held the lead in the FedExCup standings for nine weeks, the longest consecutive period in 2015-16.
- Adam Scott (T4/The Barclays, 4/Deutsche Bank Championship, T4/BMW Championship, T8/TOUR Championship) is the fourth player to finish inside the top 10 in all four FedExCup Playoffs events in a single season, joining Rory Sabbatini in 2007, Pádraig Harrington in 2009 and Dustin Johnson in 2012.
- For the first time since the inception of the FedExCup in 2007, two rookies (Emiliano Grillo and Si Woo Kim) qualified for the TOUR Championship. In 10 years, only nine of the 300 players to qualify for the Playoff Finale have been rookies.

Additional 2015-16 season notes

With nine straight seasons with a PGA TOUR title, Dustin Johnson owns the longest active streak of seasons with a TOUR victory.



Dustin Johnson led the TOUR in Adjusted Scoring Average (69.172) to earn the Byron Nelson Award. Johnson also finished first on Official Money List (\$9,365,185) to earn the Arnold Palmer Award.

With a T6 finish at the TOUR Championship, Johnson led the PGA TOUR in top-10 finishes in 2015-16 with 15, tied with Jordan Spieth (2014-15) for second-most since Vijay Singh recorded 18 top-10 finishes during the 2005 season.

Continuing a trend from past seasons, 14 different winners under the age of 30 accounted for a total of 18 PGA TOUR titles in 2015-16.

The 2015-16 season featured 16 first-time winners, the second-most in a season since 1970, and two short of the record of 18 (2002). The start of the season set the pace for first-timers to dominate in 2015-16 with the first five events being won by players earning their first PGA TOUR victory.

With his 13th career PGA TOUR title at the season-ending TOUR Championship, Rory McIlroy owns the most wins on the PGA TOUR since 2010 ahead of Jason Day (10), Dustin Johnson (10) and Bubba Watson (9).

Scoring records:

- Jim Furyk's 58 in the final round of the Travelers Championship marked the first-ever sub-59 round in an official PGA TOUR event. Furyk is also one of just six players to shoot 59 on the PGA TOUR, having done so in the second round of the 2013 BMW Championship.
- There were three rounds of 63 in the major championships to tie the 18-hole major record: Robert Streb (PGA Championship), Henrik Stenson and Phil Mickelson (The Open Championship). Stenson's final-round 63 was the lowest-final round score in Open Championship history and his Stenson's 264 total score broke the 72-hole total score in a major of 265 by David Toms at the 2001 PGA Championship.

Of the six multiple winners in 2015-16, three won in back-to-back starts: Dustin Johnson (2016 U.S. Open, World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational), Jason Day (2016 Arnold Palmer Invitational Presented by MasterCard, World Golf Championships-Dell Match Play) and Adam Scott (2016 The Honda Classic, World Golf Championships-Cadillac Championship).

A total of 29 of 44 stroke play events in 2015-16 were determined by a one-stroke margin (16) or a playoff (13).

Two events were won in wire-to-wire fashion last season and current world No. 1 Jason Day was the champion at both. Day led from start to finish to claim the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by MasterCard in March and again at THE PLAYERS Championship in May.

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