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2017 CareerBuilder Challenge - Tournament Notes

Dates: January 16-22, 2017

Where: La Quinta, Calif.

Courses:

TPC Stadium Course/PGA WEST; La Quinta, Calif.

Par/Yards: 72/7,300

Nicklaus Tournament/PGA WEST; La Quinta, Calif.

Par/Yards: 72/7,204

La Quinta Country Club; La Quinta, Calif.

Par/Yards: 72/7,060

Field: 156

2016 champion: Jason Dufner

Purse: \$5,800,000 (\$1,044,000/winner)

FedExCup: 500 points to the winner

Format: 72-hole stroke play (Rds. 1-3 are pro-am format)

Facebook: facebook.com/CareerBuilderChallenge

Twitter: @cbgolfchallenge

World Golf Hall of Fame Member Phil Mickelson to serve as official Tournament Ambassador

This year, the CareerBuilder Challenge welcomes World Golf Hall of Fame member Phil Mickelson as its tournament ambassador. One of the most popular players in PGA TOUR history, Mickelson has been a longtime supporter of the CareerBuilder Challenge and the Coachella Valley community, with two of his 42 career PGA TOUR wins coming here in the desert (2002, 2004). Mickelson finished T3 at last year's CareerBuilder Challenge, his 13th start in the event. Mickelson's status for the event is uncertain due to a second hernia surgery he underwent in December. The initial surgery was performed on October 19.

"A Whole New Game!"

The CareerBuilder Challenge is poised to deliver fun and entertainment on a broader level, designed to draw upon the interests of everyone in the community, golf fan or otherwise. Among the off-course activities is a first-ever, free Saturday night concert featuring indie-pop sensations "Fitz and the Tantrums." Other musicians scheduled to perform throughout the week include members of R.E.M., Journey, Starship and Kansas.

Honoring the legacy of Arnold Palmer

Arnold Palmer, golf's greatest ambassador, was an integral part of the PGA TOUR's stop in the California desert from the tournament's outset, having played with U.S. Presidents, celebrities and tournament host Bob Hope during his 34 starts from 1960 to 2002. Palmer's five wins in the Coachella Valley include the inaugural Palm Springs Golf Classic in 1960, as well as his 62nd and final TOUR win in 1973. He also served as tournament host for the 50th anniversary of the Bob Hope Desert Classic in 2009. This week, we remember Palmer's significant contributions towards the PGA TOUR's event in the California desert as well as growth of the modern-day PGA TOUR.

Venues for the 2017 CareerBuilder Challenge

For just the third time (1987, 2016), the Stadium Course at PGA WEST will be a part of this year's rotation. The three courses in this year's mix are PGA WEST (Stadium), PGA WEST (Nicklaus Private) and La Quinta Country Club.

How the CareerBuilder Challenge was won in 2016

In search of his fourth career PGA TOUR victory and first win since the 2013 PGA Championship, Jason Dufner opened with scores of 64-65-64 to take a two-stroke lead over Jamie Lovemark into the final round at 23-under 193. Following a one-over 37 on his outing nine, Dufner reeled off three straight birdies at Nos. 10-12 en route to a two-under 70 and force sudden death with David Lingmerth at 25-under 263. On the second extra hole, No. 18, Dufner's par proved too much for Lingmerth. The victory marked Dufner's first top-10 finish in seven starts in the event. His previous-best finish was T12 in 2012. Dufner also led the field in birdies for the week, with 30. He was four clear of Lingmerth and Andrew Loupe. The 72-hole tournament record is 32, held by Patrick Reed in 2014.

More on Jason Dufner

Dufner, who came into last season's CareerBuilder Challenge on the heels of back-to-back T9 finishes at The RSM Classic and Sony Open in Hawaii, ultimately amassed six top-10 finishes in the 2015-16 PGA TOUR Season. Playing his way into all four FedExCup Playoffs events, Dufner ended his season ranked 19th in the FedExCup standings. In just two starts this season, Dufner finished 21st at the SBS Tournament of Champions and missed last week's cut at the Sony Open in Hawaii.

A look at the field

- Eleven of the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking: Patrick Reed (8), Paul Casey (16), Phil Mickelson (22), Emiliano Grillo (25), Francesco Molinari (33), Scott Piercy (36), Zach Johnson (38), Bill Haas (41), William McGirt (42), Kevin Na (46) and Soren Kjeldsen (49).
- Sixteen players currently inside the top 30 on the FedExCup points list, headlined by California native Brendan Steele (No. 4).
- Eleven of the 30 players who qualified for the 2016 TOUR Championship: Paul Casey, Jason Dufner, Emiliano Grillo, Roberto Castro, William McGirt, Sean O'Hair, Phil Mickelson, Patrick Reed, Jhonattan Vegas, Kevin Na and Kevin Kisner.
- Twelve past champions of the CareerBuilder Challenge are in the field: Mark Brooks (1996), John Cook (1997), Phil Mickelson (2002, 2004), Chad Campbell (2006), Charley Hoffman (2007), D.J. Trahan (2008), Bill Haas (2010, 2015), Jhonattan Vegas (2011), Mark Wilson (2012), Brian Gay (2013), Patrick Reed (2014) and Jason Dufner (2016).
- Phil Mickelson, a World Golf Hall of Fame member, owner 42 PGA TOUR titles, of which five were major championship titles, is scheduled to make his 14th career start at the CareerBuilder Challenge, with wins in 2002 and 2004. He finished T3 in 2016.
- The 2015 CareerBuilder Champion Patrick Reed will return for his fifth start in the CareerBuilder Challenge. En route to his 2014 victory, Reed opened with three straight rounds of 63 en route to 72-hole tournament record of 32 birdies. Since his win in Palm Springs, Reed has won a World Golf Championships event (2014 Mexico Championship), a winners-only event (2015 SBS Tournament of Champions) and a FedExCup Playoffs event (2016 The Barclays). He also represented the United States at the Olympic Games in Rio (2016), the Presidents Cup (2015) and the Ryder Cup (2014 and 2016). In his last start, Reed finished T6 at the SBS Tournament of Champions.
- 2016 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year Emiliano Grillo is poised to make his first career CareerBuilder Challenge start this week. The Argentine earned last season's PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year honors after winning the Safeway Open in his first start as a PGA TOUR member, which he followed with additional top-10 finishes in the FedExCup Playoffs at The Barclays (T2) and TOUR Championship (T10). Grillo also represented Argentina when golf returned to the Olympics for the first time since 1904 in the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, finishing tied for eighth.
- 2010 and 2015 CareerBuilder champion Bill Haas will be making his 13th start in the CareerBuilder Challenge this week. In addition to his two victories, Haas also finished in the top 10 in 2011 (T2), 2014 (T6) and 2016 (T9). Haas, the 2011 FedExCup champion, is in search of his seventh career PGA TOUR win and first since the 2015 CareerBuilder Challenge.
- 2011 CareerBuilder Challenge winner Jhonattan Vegas will return to the CareerBuilder Challenge for a seventh-consecutive start. Vegas enjoyed a career-best PGA TOUR season in 2016-17, where he won his second TOUR title at the RBC Canadian Open. As a result, Vegas finished inside the top 30 in the FedExCup standings (29th) and made his first appearance at the TOUR Championship (T24).
- 2016 Australian PGA Championship winner Harold Varner III enjoyed a strong rookie season on the PGA TOUR in 2016-17, highlighted by four top-10 finishes. His best among them was a T5 at the OHL Classic at Mayakoba. In five starts this season, Varner's best finish is a T15 at the Safeway Open. In his only other start at the CareerBuilder Challenge, Varner missed last year's cut.
- 2015 Open Champion Zach Johnson will make his seventh start, and sixth-straight, in this year's CareerBuilder Challenge. Johnson finished inside the top 10 in 2014 (T3) and 2012 (T8). Johnson is the winner of 12 PGA TOUR events, including the 2007 Masters and 2015 Open Championship. He tied for sixth last week at the Sony Open in Hawaii thanks to a second-round 61.
- Arnold Palmer's grandson, PGA TOUR member Sam Saunders, will play the CareerBuilder Challenge on a sponsor exemption.
- Aaron Wise, who qualified for the Web.com Tour in 2016 via the Mackenzie Tour, will play the CareerBuilder Challenge on a sponsor exemption. Wise, 20, was the individual NCAA champion last year at the University of Oregon before turning professional.

The CareerBuilder Challenge and the FedExCup

The CareerBuilder Challenge enters the fourth season featuring a wraparound schedule that bridges two years with 47 events. The 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season began with seven events during the fall of 2016, each of which awarded FedExCup points. After a seven-week break, the season resumed two weeks ago at the SBS Tournament

of Champions, won by Justin Thomas. The FedExCup Playoffs once again features four events and concludes in September with the TOUR Championship and the crowning of the FedExCup champion.

Since the FedExCup's 2007 inception, the winner of the CareerBuilder Challenge has made it all the way to the TOUR Championship that year four times, including each of the last three years: Jason Dufner (2016), Bill Haas (2015), Patrick Reed (2014) and D.J. Trahan (2008).

Charity

Since its inception, the CareerBuilder Challenge has been unwavering in its commitment to charity on a variety of levels. To date, the tournament's host organization, Desert Classic Charities, has provided more than \$60 million to the Eisenhower Medical Center and other non-profit organizations in the region.

CareerBuilder's "Find Your Calling"

This year, Desert Classic Charities introduces CareerBuilder's "Find Your Calling," a job-placement initiative provided to all seven Coachella Valley Boys & Girls Clubs. Representatives from CareerBuilder and the Boys & Girls Clubs will be on site Wednesday of tournament week to offer insight into the new enhancement.

Miscellaneous

- Johnny Miller is the only back-to-back winner of the CareerBuilder Challenge (1975-76).
- Arnold Palmer won the CareerBuilder Challenge five times. The only other players to win more than once are two-time champions Billy Casper, John Mahaffey, Johnny Miller, Corey Pavin, John Cook, Phil Mickelson and Bill Haas.