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2017 Waste Management Phoenix Open pre-tournament notes

Dates: January 30 – February 5, 2017
Where: Scottsdale, Ariz.
Courses: TPC Scottsdale (Par/Yards: 71/7,266)
Field size: 132
2014 champion: Hideki Matsuyama
Purse: \$6,700,000 (\$1,206,000/winner)
FedExCup: 500 points to the winner
Format: 72-hole stroke play
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The “Greenest Show on Grass” poised for another outstanding week:

- Once again, the Waste Management Phoenix Open features a top-notch field that includes 26 of the top 30 in the FedExCup standings and marks FedExCup leader Justin Thomas’ first start since winning back-to-back at the SBS Tournament of Champions and Sony Open in Hawaii.
- Record crowds are once again anticipated at the 2017 Waste Management Phoenix Open. Last year, more than 65,000 fans came out to TPC Scottsdale for Sunday’s final round, helping to break a new weekly attendance record at 618,365. That mark eclipsed the previous record of 564,368 that was set in 2015. All told three attendance records were broken in 2016 — the weekly attendance mark, plus record crowds on Friday (160,415) and Saturday (201,003).
- With massive crowds once again expected in 2017, the tournament has asked fans to be ambassadors for “their” event with an overall theme of respect to ensure an enjoyable experience for all. The tagline is: Respect the game. Respect the players. Respect the fans.
- Now in its 82nd year, the event surpassed the \$100 million in all-time charitable giving in 2015, making it the third PGA TOUR event to achieve the historic milestone, along with the AT&T Byron Nelson and the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.
- The Waste Management Phoenix Open has done something that no other sporting event, municipality, or company in the world has ever done – Zero Waste – for four straight years.
- The Waste Management Phoenix Open was named the 2015 PGA TOUR Tournament of the Year and this year was co-honored for Best Sales Award at the 2016 year-end PGA TOUR tournament meetings.
- First of a 10-year contract extension with Waste Management began in 2016.
- World No. 5 Hideki Matsuyama set to defend.

How Hideki Matsuyama won the 2016 Waste Management Phoenix Open

Japan’s Hideki Matsuyama, who began last year’s final round trailing by three strokes at 10-under, birdied the 72nd hole to post a 4-under 67 and force sudden death with Rickie Fowler. With a par on the fourth extra hole, No. 17, Matsuyama claimed his second career PGA TOUR title in his 65th start on TOUR. Matsuyama had previously won the 2014 Memorial Tournament.

More on Hideki Matsuyama

Following his win in Scottsdale last year, Matsuyama went on to claim six more top-10 finishes, good for a season-long total of eight. Among them were a pair of T7 finishes at the Masters and PLAYERS Championship and a T4 at the PGA Championship. Matsuyama is off to an even stronger season so far this season. On the PGA TOUR, he claimed his third career TOUR win at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions and finished second at the CIMB Classic and SBS Tournament of Champions. On the Japan Golf Tour, he won the Japan Open Golf Champions and Mitsui Sumitomo Visa Taiheiyo. He also won Tiger Woods’ unofficial Hero World Challenge in December.

A broad look at the field

- Ten of this season's 11 winners on the PGA TOUR: Brendan Steele (Safeway Open), Justin Thomas (CIMB Classic, SBS Tournament of Champions, Sony Open in Hawaii), Hideki Matsuyama (World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions), Cody Gribble (Sanderson Farms Championship), Rod Pampling (Shriners Hospitals for Children Open), Pat Perez (OHL Classic at Mayakoba), Mackenzie Hughes (The RSM Classic), Jon Rahm (Farmers Insurance Open).
- 26 of the top 30 in the current FedExCup standings, led by No. 1 Justin Thomas.
- Two players that have posted rounds of 59 in 2016-17 are in the field, Justin Thomas (Round 1, Sony Open in Hawaii) and Adam Hadwin (Round 3, CareerBuilder Challenge). The two 59s were the seventh and eighth rounds of 59 or better in PGA TOUR history.
- Last year's runner-up Rickie Fowler, who fell in a sudden-death playoff to Hideki Matsuyama.
- 13 of the top 30 in the Official World Golf Ranking led by Hideki Matsuyama (5), Jordan Spieth (6), Justin Thomas (8) and Patrick Reed (9).
- Eight past Waste Management Phoenix Open champions: Hideki Matsuyama (2016), Brooks Koepka (2015), Phil Mickelson (2005, 2013), Kyle Stanley (2012), Mark Wilson (2011), Hunter Mahan (2010), J.B. Holmes (2006, 2008) and Aaron Baddeley (2007).

Youth Movement Continues

With 22-year-old Jon Rahm's win at the Farmers Insurance Open last week, he became the eighth player under the age of 30 to win in 2016-17 through 11 events. Rahm is the youngest winner since Si Woo Kim won the 2016 Wyndham Championship at the age of 21 years, 1 month, 24 days. Here's the list of winners under the age of 30 in 2016-17:

Date	Tournament	Winner	Birthdate	Age won
10/23	CIMB Classic	Justin Thomas	4/29/93	23 years, 5 months, 24 days
10/30	WGC-HSBC Champions	Hideki Matsuyama	2/25/92	24 years, 8 months, 5 days
10/30	Sanderson Farms Championship	Cody Gribble	9/20/90	26 years, 1 month, 10 days
11/20	The RSM Classic	Mackenzie Hughes	11/23/90	25 years, 11 months, 29 days
1/8	SBS Tournament of Champions	Justin Thomas	4/29/93	23 years, 8 months, 10 days
1/15	Sony Open in Hawaii	Justin Thomas	4/29/93	23 years, 8 months, 17 days
1/22	CareerBuilder Challenge	Hudson Swafford	9/9/87	29 years, 4 months, 13 days
1/29	Farmers Insurance Open	Jon Rahm	11/10/94	22 years, 2 months, 19 days

Three-time Waste Management Phoenix Open champion Phil Mickelson returns for 28th start

- With this week's start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open, his 28th, World Golf Hall of Fame member Phil Mickelson will be one start shy of the record of 29 shared by Gene Littler, Jim Ferrier and Jerry Barber.
- In search of his first PGA TOUR win since the 2013 Open Championship, and 43rd overall, Arizona State University alum Phil Mickelson will make his 28th career start at this week's Waste Management Phoenix Open. He is a three-time winner of the event (1996, 2005, 2013), with a total of 10 top-10 finishes.
- Mickelson has twice posted an 11-under 60 in the event; R1/2013, R2/2005.
- Mickelson's average winning margin of victory in his three wins at the Waste Management Phoenix Open is 3.667 strokes (playoff/1996, 5 strokes/2005, 4 strokes/2013).
- Since 1989, Mickelson has played in the event each year, with the exception of 1990 (27 total).

Player notes

- Three-time PGA TOUR winner this season Justin Thomas is poised to make his third start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open. Thomas, the current FedExCup points leader, has already won the CIMB Classic, SBS Tournament of Champions and Sony Open in Hawaii this season. En route to his victory at Waialae Country Club, Thomas became the seventh player to post a 59 (11-under/R1) in PGA TOUR history. He finished T17 in 2015 and missed the cut in 2016.
- 2016 Arizona State graduate Jon Rahm drained an eagle on the 72nd hole, from 60'8" away to post a final-round 65 and clinch his maiden PGA TOUR victory at last week's Farmers Insurance Open at the age of 22 years, 2 months, 19 days. Amazingly, Rahm became the first player since Jay Don Blake (1991) to earn his first PGA TOUR title at the Farmers Insurance Open. Rahm was a four-time All-American at ASU and is the only player to win multiple Ben Hogan Awards (2015 and 2016), given to the NCAA's top collegiate male golfer.
- The 2015 FedExCup champion Jordan Spieth returns to TPC Scottsdale for a second time. In 2015, Spieth finished T7 with scores of 70-68-70-65—273 (-11). Spieth comes into this week's Waste Management Phoenix Open with third-place showings in both starts this season; SBS Tournament of Champions (T3) and Sony Open in Hawaii (3rd). On the PGA TOUR last season, Spieth collected his seventh and eight TOUR victories at the SBS Tournament of Champions and Dean & DELUCA Invitational.

- Patrick Reed, who captured his fifth career PGA TOUR title last year at The Barclays, one of 11 top-10 finishes on his season, will be making his third start in this week's Waste Management Phoenix Open. He finished T19 in 2014 and T40 in 2015. In addition to his successes in TOUR events last season, Reed represented the United States at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games (T11). He also competed in his second Ryder Cup, going 3-1-1 in five matches.
- Two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson returns to TPC Scottsdale this week for a 10th-consecutive appearance in the event. In his previous nine starts, he has collected three top-10 finishes, including a pair of T2s in 2014 and 2015. In his first start in Scottsdale, he finished T8 in 2007. In the 2014-15 PGA TOUR Season, Watson won the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions and Travelers Championship, both via playoffs. In addition to the wins, he amassed six top-5 finishes. Watson, who is making his third start of the season this week, is in search of his ninth career PGA TOUR win. Watson will be joined in this year's Wednesday pro-am by actor Mark Wahlberg, whose latest film "Patriots Day" recently hit theatres.
- The 2017 U.S. Presidents Cup Captain Steve Stricker will make his first start of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season. Stricker, a 12-time winner on the PGA TOUR, turns 50 on February 23 and will play in his own PGA TOUR Champions event in June, the American Family Insurance Championship in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin, where he serves as tournament host.
- Andrew "Beef" Johnston caught the attention of the golf world with his eighth-place finish in last year's Open Championship at Royal Troon Golf Club. Johnson, who divided his time last season between the PGA TOUR, European Tour and Web.com Tour, earned his exempt status to the PGA TOUR this season by virtue of his 21st-place finish on the 2016 Web.com Tour priority list. Johnston came to be known as "Beef" by friends in his childhood years. Born in London to a working-class family, his late father worked as a bus driver and at a timber company, while his mother worked in a school cafeteria.

Waste Management Phoenix Open notes

- Seven of the 10 winners of the Waste Management Phoenix Open in the FedExCup era (2007-present) have qualified for the FedExCup finale, the TOUR Championship: Aaron Baddeley (2007), Kenny Perry (2009), Hunter Mahan (2010), Mark Wilson (2011), Phil Mickelson (2013), Brooks Koepka (2015) and Hideki Matsuyama (2016).
- Three of the last five winners of the Waste Management Phoenix Open made their win in Scottsdale their first on the PGA TOUR; Brooks Koepka (2015), Kevin Stadler (2014) and Kyle Stanley (2012). The others since 2000 were J.B. Holmes (2006) and Jonathan Kaye (2004).
- Since 1980, only three players have won the Waste Management Phoenix Open in a first attempt: Jeff Mitchell (1980), Kyle Stanley (2012) and Brooks Koepka (2015).