

Hideki Matsuyama

Starting round one on No. 10, defending Waste Management Phoenix Open champion and World No. 5 Hideki Matsuyama made six birdies and no bogeys. En route to doing so, he hit 10 of 14 fairways in regulation, but missed just one green (No. 1).

In last year's opening round at TPC Scottsdale, Matsuyama made eight birdies and two bogeys, good for a share of the 18-hole lead at 6-under 65.

Matsuyama is making his fourth-consecutive start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open, where he has yet to finish outside the top five. He finished T4 in 2014, T2 in 2015 and won in 2016. Interestingly, he has finished at 14-under 270 each year.

Matsuyama is making his sixth start of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season this week. Among his previous five finishes was a victory at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions and runner-up showings at the CIMB Classic and SBS Tournament of Champions.

On the Japan Golf Tour late last season, he won the Japan Open Golf Championship and Mitsui Sumitomo Visa Taiheiyo. Those two victories came in a four-week stretch where he claimed his win on the PGA TOUR at the WGC-HSBC Champions and finished second at the CIMB Classic.

In three starts at the Waste Management Phoenix Open coming into this week, Matsuyama has earned \$1,913,200. By comparison, Phil Mickelson, who has won the event three times in 27 starts (before this week), has collected \$3,865,363.

Brendan Steele

In an event where he finished T5, T6 and T6 in 2012-14, respectively, Brendan Steele's opening-round of 6-under 65 comes as little surprise. The only event on the PGA TOUR in which he has more top-10 finishes is the Barracuda Championship (2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016).

Beginning on No. 10, Steele was four under through five holes after holing his second shot on No. 14 from 194 yards. He would add birdies on Nos. 15, 18, 1, 3 and 8 to post the 65. He made three bogeys on his inward nine on Nos. 2, 4 and 5.

Through six previous starts at TPC Scottsdale, Steele's first-round scoring average is 70.17, more than two strokes higher than his next highest of 68.00 (rounds three and four).

Steele claimed his second career PGA TOUR win in the first event of the 2016-17 season in October at the Safeway Open. In addition to the win in Napa Valley, Steele also posted top-10 finishes this season at the SBC Tournament of Champions (T6) and CareerBuilder Challenge (T6).

Steele first broke into the winner's circle in his rookie year of 2011 at the Valero Texas Open.

Steele, who has just three over-par scores in 25 rounds at the Waste Management Phoenix Open, is now 66-under-par.

John Peterson

Making his second start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open (T61/2014), John Peterson opened with a bogey-free, 5-under 66.

Peterson hit 10 of 14 fairways in regulation and 16 of 18 greens (Nos. 10 and 15).

Peterson began the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season on a Major Medical Extension, with 23 available events to earn 453 FedExCup points or \$704,870 to remain exempt for the remainder of the season. He comes into this week with 18 events remaining, still in need of \$593,817 or 402 FedExCup points. In order to fulfill the requirements this week, he would need to win or finish alone in second place.

In the five starts Peterson has made this season, he has made two cuts, with a T15 at the OHL Classic at Mayakoba being his best finish.

Peterson, who joined the PGA TOUR in the 2013-14 season, is looking to improve on a career-best finish of T4 from the 2012 U.S. Open.

Peterson won the individual title at the 2011 NCAA Men's Golf Championship while at LSU.

Rickie Fowler

In his ninth start at the Waste Management Phoenix Open and a year removed from his playoff loss at TPC Scottsdale, Rickie Fowler opened with a 4-under 67. He also finished second in 2010.

Fowler, a three-time winner on the PGA TOUR, is in search of his first win since the 2015 Dell Technologies Championship at TPC Boston. Prior to that, he won the 2012 Wells Fargo Championship and 2015 PLAYERS Championship.

Fowler is making just his third start of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season, having finished T6 at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions and missing last week's cut at the Farmers Insurance Open.

Phil Mickelson

Making his 28th start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open, one start away from the record for most, Phil Mickelson opened with a bogey-free, 3-under 68. He will begin round two four strokes back.

En route to his three wins at the Waste Management Phoenix Open, Mickelson was six strokes back after round one in 1996 and 2005, but held a four-stroke lead after 18 holes in 2013, after opening with an 11-under 60.

Through 27 previous starts in the Waste Management Phoenix Open, Mickelson's opening-round scoring average was 69.19. He is now 19 of 28 with sub-par scores in the first round of the event.

Mickelson is hoping to become the first four-time winner of this event. Mark Calcavecchia, Gene Littler and Arnold Palmer also captured three tournament titles.

Mickelson's 10 top-10 finishes in the event is the tournament record by one over Mark Calcavecchia.

Mickelson is making his fourth start of the season, with a T8 at the Safeway Open his best showing. He is in search of his 43rd career PGA TOUR victory and first since the 2013 Open Championship.

Bubba Watson

Former Scottsdale resident Bubba Watson opened with a 2-under 69. In 39 rounds in the event now, Watson is 38 of 39 with scores of par-or-better (11 starts). His only over-par score was a 2-over 73 in last year's third round.

Watson is making his 11th-consecutive start at this week's Waste Management Phoenix Open, where he has finished inside the top 15 the last five years; T14/2016, T2/2015, T2/2014, 15th/2013 and T5/2012. His other top-15 finish at TPC Scottsdale was a T8 in his first start of 2007.

Watson is making just his third start of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR. He finished T54 at the WGC-HSBC Champions and T25 at the SBS Tournament of Champions.

Miscellaneous Notes

Last week's winner of the Farmers Insurance Open Jon Rahm opened with a 1-under 70 in his second start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open. In 2015, he finished T5 as an amateur.

On the strength of three wins so far in the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season, FedExCup points leader Justin Thomas opened with a 2-under 69 in his third start in the Waste Management Phoenix Open. He finished T17 in 2015 and missed last year's cut.

South Korean Sung Kang was one of nine players to return Friday morning to complete the final round. With a bogey on No. 18, Kang closed his round birdie, bogey, birdie, birdie, birdie, bogey for a 3-under 68. Last year, Kang had Mike "Fluff" Cowan as his caddie while shooting a course-record, and career-low 60 at Monterey Peninsular CC during the second round of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Past Waste Management Phoenix Open champions: Hideki Matsuyama/2016 (65), Brooks Koepka/2015 (67), Phil Mickelson/2005, 2013 (68), Kyle Stanley/2012 (72), Mark Wilson/2011 (70), Hunter Mahan/2010 (71), J.B. Holmes/2006, 2008 (67) and Aaron Baddeley/2007 (74).

Pat Perez withdrew during round one with an aggravated shoulder.

First-round Scoring Averages

Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
35.298	35.641	70.939	---

Bogey-free rounds at TPC Scottsdale:

R1: Byeong Hun An (66), Ryo Ishikawa (68), Chris Kirk (66), Matt Kuchar (64), Marc Leishman (68), Hideki Matsuyama (65), William McGirt (69), Phil Mickelson (68), Geoff Ogilvy (70), John Peterson (66).