



**2016 World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions**  
(3<sup>rd</sup> of 43 events in the 2016-17 PGA TOUR Season)

Shanghai, China      October 27-30    FedExCup points: 550 (winner)  
Sheshan International Golf Club

Purse: \$9,500,000  
Par/Yards: 36-36—72/7,199

**First-Round Notes – Thursday, October 27, 2016**

*The World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions is the third event in the PGA TOUR's wraparound schedule that bridges two years with 43 official regular season events and four FedExCup Playoffs events. Over the span of the PGA TOUR season, players vie to become the FedExCup champion, which distinguishes the one player who not only performs well during the PGA TOUR season, but also excels through the four-event FedExCup Playoffs, culminating with the 2017 TOUR Championship.*

**First-Round Leaderboard**

<b>Player</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Official World Golf Ranking</b>
Rikard Karlberg	64 (-8)	SWE	87
Rickie Fowler	65 (-7)	USA	11
Daniel Berger	66 (-6)	USA	38
Russell Knox	66 (-6)	SCO	20
Hideki Matsuyama	66 (-6)	JPN	10

**Rikard Karlberg**

With fellow Swedes Alexander Noren and Henrik Stenson both having strong years in 2016, Rikard Karlberg, who has one win on the European Tour (2015 72 OPEN D'ITALIA presented by DAMIANI) shot an opening-round 8-under-par 68 to take a one-stroke lead over Rickie Fowler.

Karlberg is playing in the first World Golf Championships event of his career. Last year, Scotland's Russell Knox became the second player to win a World Golf Championships event in his debut. Aside from Jeff Maggert, who won the very first World Golf Championships at the 1999 Accenture Match Play Championship, no player had won a World Golf Championships in his first start in the series. He is also the first player from Scotland to win a World Golf Championships title.

In his European Tour win in Italy, Karlberg bested Martin Kaymer in a playoff on the final day at Golf Club Milano. Earlier in his career, Karlberg won the Asian Tour Rookie of the Year Award in 2010, and topped the Nordic League Rankings in 2007 courtesy of four victories. He cites his fellow Gothenburg native Henrik Stenson as one of his inspirations.

Karlberg, who is not a member of the PGA TOUR, can earn Special Temporary Membership for the remainder of the 2016-17 PGA TOUR season. To do so, he would need to earn more than the player that finished No. 150 on the 2015-16 FedExCup points list (319/Greg Owen). Once a player passes that number, they will be eligible for unlimited sponsor exemptions for the remainder of the 2016-17 season in their attempt to earn their 2017-18 TOUR card.

If Karlberg earns an amount of points that equals or exceeds the amount of points earned by the player finishing in the 125th position on this year's FedExCup Points List, then he will earn membership for the 2017-18 season. As a point of reference, Seung-Yul Noh finished 125 in FedExCup points with 454 points last year. But it won't be determined how much Karlberg would need to earn until the full 2016-17 season has been completed.

If Karlberg, as a nonmember of the PGA TOUR, was to win the HSBC Champions, he would have 60 days to accept full PGA TOUR membership.

### **Rickie Fowler**

America's Rickie Fowler shot an opening-round 7-under-par 65 and is one shot off the lead. Fowler has been close to victory before at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions, having missed being a part of a playoff in 2014 when his second shot on the par-5 18<sup>th</sup> landed just short of the green and in the water.

While Fowler was held winless on the PGA TOUR in the 2015-2016 season, he held off final-round charges from Thomas Pieters, Rory McIlroy and Henrik Stenson to win the 2016 Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship, marking his second European Tour title. Final-round highlights included a holed bunker shot on the eighth hole (which helped propel him to a three-stroke cushion at the turn), a chip-in for birdie on the 17th hole and then a par on the last to hold off Pieters by one stroke.

Fowler's opening round of 67 is his best opening score in his fifth appearance at Sheshan International Golf Club.

Two of Fowler's six international victories have come in Asia with the 2011 Kolon Korean Open and the 2016 Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship.

### **Russell Knox**

Defending champion and two-time PGA TOUR winner Russell Knox picked up where he left off in China in 2015 with an opening-round 66 to put him T3 heading into the second round. Last year, the 30-year-old Scotsman carded a 4-under 68 on Sunday and posted 20-under 268, good for a two-stroke win over Kevin Kisner. Knox captured his first-career PGA TOUR victory in his 93rd start at the age of 30 years, 4 months 18 days and earned a three-year exemption on TOUR through the 2018-2019 season.

Knox was able to record his second victory of the year later in the season at the Travelers Championship in August. With his second win of the season, Knox joined Jason Day, Jordan Spieth, Dustin Johnson, Adam Scott and Rory McIlroy as the only multiple winners in 2015-16.

Knox played well in his season debut at last week's CIMB Classic where he entered the final round tied for second before a final-round 74 resulted in a T10 finish.

### **Daniel Berger**

Playing in the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions for the second time in his career, Daniel Berger is in good position to build on his T11 finish from last year after an opening-round 66. Last season, his sophomore season on TOUR, Berger qualified for all four FedExCup Playoffs events and reached the season-ending TOUR Championship for the second consecutive season.

The 2014-2015 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year converted a three-stroke lead after 36 and 54 holes into a three-stroke victory at this year's FedEx St. Jude Classic, his first on the PGA TOUR in his 50th TOUR start at the age of 23 years, 2 months, 5 days. The win came as he held PGA TOUR veterans Phil Mickelson and Steve Stricker at bay in the final round, with the pair finishing T2 alongside Berger's fellow Florida State Seminole Brooks Koepka. The win was one of Berger's three top-five finishes on TOUR last season.

### **Hideki Matsuyama**

Hideki Matsuyama is tied with Berger and Knox at 6-under-par two off the lead. Matsuyama, who finished a career-best 13<sup>th</sup> in the FedExCup last season, won the Japan Open two weeks ago before finishing runner-up to Justin Thomas at last week's CIMB Classic. A two-time winner on the PGA TOUR, including his playoff win over Rickie

Fowler at the Waste Management Phoenix Open earlier this year, is looking for his second top-10 finish in a World Golf Championships event in his 14<sup>th</sup> start and to improve his best finish at the HSBC Champions (T41-2014).

### **Miscellaneous stats**

2016 FedExCup champion Rory McIlroy shot an opening-round 71 and is T24 after round one. 2016 PGA TOUR Player of the Year Dustin Johnson, who won the HSBC Champions in 2013, shot a 2-over-par 74. In all of the 2015-2016 season, Johnson only shot 74 or worse in one opening round on the PGA TOUR, a 77 at the opening round of the PGA Championship.

Showing the true global reach of the World Golf Championships, there are nine countries represented in the top 10 on the leaderboard after the first round.

### **Past HSBC Champions are in the field:**

Player	Year	Score	Standing
Sergio Garcia	2008	68 (-4)	T9
Francesco Molinari	2010	67 (-5)	T6
Martin Kaymer	2011	72 (E)	T35
Dustin Johnson	2013	74 (+2)	T57
Bubba Watson	2014	71 (-1)	T24
Russell Knox	2015	66 (-6)	T3

### **Six players representing China are in the field:**

Player	Score	Standing
Wu, Ashun	72 (E)	T35
Dou, Zecheng	75 (+5)	T70
Li, Hao Tong	73 (+1)	T50
Liang, WC	72 (E)	T35
Zhang, Huilin	72 (E)	T35
Zhang, Xinjun	68 (-4)	T9

### **Quick review of tournament history:**

- The HSBC Champions was created in November 2005 and became an official European Tour and Asian Tour event beginning in 2006. In 2009, the HSBC Champions was granted World Golf Championships status.
- Champions include
  - 2005 – David Howell
  - 2006 – Y.E. Yang
  - 2007 – Phil Mickelson
  - 2008 – Sergio Garcia
  - 2009 – Phil Mickelson
  - 2010 – Francesco Molinari
  - 2011 – Martin Kaymer
  - 2012 – Ian Poulter
  - 2013 – Dustin Johnson
  - 2014 – Bubba Watson
  - 2015 – Russell Knox

Scoring averages at the par-72 Sheshan International Golf Club

	<b>Front 9</b>	<b>Back 9</b>	<b>Total</b>
R1:	35.719	36.256	71.975

**Bogey-free rounds:** Rickie Fowler (65), Daniel Berger (66), Russell Knox (66), Hideki Matsuyama (66), Francesco Molinari (67), George Coetzee (69), Lee Westwood (69)

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