



HOUSTON OPEN

EST. 1946

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Houston Open pre-tournament notes

Dates: March 26-April 1, 2018

Where: Golf Club of Houston; Humble, Texas

Par/Yards: 36-36—72/7,441 yards

Field: 144

2017 champion: Russell Henley

Purse: \$7,000,000 (\$1,260,000 to the winner)

FedExCup: 500 points to the winner

Format: 72-hole stroke play

Website: houstonopen.org **Instagram:** Houopen **Twitter:** @houopen

PGA TOUR LIVE Featured Groups

THURSDAY:

Broadcast time: 8:30AM/ET - 7:00PM/ET

Twitter Window: 8:30AM/ET – approx. 9:30AM/ET

9:00 AM/ET: Chris Stroud / Jhonattan Vegas / Jordan Spieth

9:10 AM/ET: Henrik Stenson / Rickie Fowler / Martin Kaymer

FRIDAY:

Broadcast time: 8:30AM/ET - 7:00PM/ET

Twitter Window: 8:30AM/ET – approx. 9:30AM/ET

9:00 AM/ET: Daniel Berger / Matt Kuchar / Steve Stricker

9:10 AM/ET: Phil Mickelson / Justin Rose / Russell Henley

The Houston Open and the FedExCup

The Houston Open is the 22nd event in the PGA TOUR's wraparound schedule that bridges two years with 48 official events (including four FedExCup Playoffs events). Entering the Houston Open, Justin Thomas has led the FedExCup standings for the past five weeks, with the reigning FedExCup champion holding a 384-point lead over Patton Kizzire.

The field this week includes four past FedExCup champions Bill Haas (2011), Brandt Snedeker (2012), Henrik Stenson (2013) and Jordan Spieth (2015).

In addition, nine of the top 30 in the FedExCup standings are in the field, led by Phil Mickelson (No. 3), Justin Rose (No. 7) and Tony Finau (No. 9). The others are Chez Reavie (No. 16), Luke List (No. 19), Chesson Hadley (No. 22), Rickie Fowler (No. 28), James Hahn (No. 29) and Charles Howell III (No. 30).

Five of the last seven winners of the Houston Open have advanced to the FedExCup finale, the TOUR Championship, with 2017 champion Russell Henley the latest to do so (finishing No. 13 in the FedExCup). Overall, six of the 11 winners have qualified since the inception of the FedExCup in 2007.

2017 Houston Open Leaderboard

Russell Henley	67-67-69-65—268 (-20)
Sung Kang	65-63-71-72—271 (-17)
Luke List	68-71-65-68—272 (-16)
Rickie Fowler	64-71-67-70—272 (-16)

How Russell Henley won the 2017 Houston Open

After entering the final round of the 2017 Houston Open trailing Sung Kang by four strokes, Russell Henley posted a 7-under 65 (with a career-best 10 birdies) to win by three over Kang (72). Henley's three-stroke winning margin was the largest at the Houston Open since Phil Mickelson won by the same margin in 2011.

More on Russell Henley

- With the victory in 2017, Henley moved from No. 52 to No. 11 in the FedExCup standings (eventually finishing a career-best No. 13).
- The Houston Open victory was Henley's third TOUR win and came in his 115th start at the age of 27 years, 11 months and 21 days (2013 Sony Open in Hawaii, 2014 Honda Classic).
- Henley won in his fifth start at the Houston Open, with his victory capping off four consecutive top-10 finishes (T45-2013, T7-2014, 4-2015, T5-2016, Won-2017).
- With rounds of 67-67-69-65 in 2017, Henley's last 13 consecutive rounds at the Golf Club of Houston have been under par. In all, he is a collective 57-under at the Golf Club of Houston.
- Henley's winning total fell two strokes shy of the 72-hole scoring record at the Houston Open (266), set by Curtis Strange (1980), Lee Trevino (1980) and Vijay Singh (2002). Since moving to the Golf Club of Houston's Tournament Course in 2006, Henley tied Phil Mickelson for the low 72-hole score of 20-under 268.

A glance at the field

- Nine of the top 30 in the FedExCup standings, led by Phil Mickelson (No. 3), Justin Rose (No. 7) and Tony Finau (No. 9). The others are Chez Reavie (No. 16), Luke List (No. 19), Chesson Hadley (No. 22), Rickie Fowler (No. 28), James Hahn (No. 29) and Charles Howell III (30).
- Seven of the top 30 in the Official World Golf Ranking, led by Jordan Spieth (No. 4), Justin Rose (No. 5), Rickie Fowler (No. 8), Henrik Stenson (No. 15), Phil Mickelson (No. 18), Matt Kuchar (No. 20) and Rafa Cabrera Bello (No. 22).
- Past Houston Open champions: Russell Henley (2017), J.B. Holmes (2015), Matt Jones (2014), D.A. Points (2013), Hunter Mahan (2012), Phil Mickelson (2011), Johnson Wagner (2008).
- Players with double-digit TOUR victories: Phil Mickelson (43), Ernie Els (19), Steve Stricker (12), Jordan Spieth (11).
- Major Championship winners in the field: Phil Mickelson (5), Ernie Els (4), Padraig Harrington (3), Jordan Spieth (3), Retief Goosen (2), Martin Kaymer (2), Keegan Bradley, Jason Dufner, Lucas Glover, Geoff Ogilvy, Justin Rose, Henrik Stenson.
- Sponsor Exemptions: Ben Crane, Bobby Gates, Padraig Harrington, Yuta Ikeda, Hunter Mahan, Johnson Wagner, Lee Westwood.

Additional Player Notes

- **Ernie Els** will make his 10th start (fifth consecutive) at the Houston Open, with last year marking his first missed cut at the event. Finished T12 in 2012 for his best finish in Houston.
- **Rickie Fowler** – Has top-10s in three of his last four starts in the Houston Open (2014/6, 2016/T10, 2017/T3). At the 2017 Houston Open, racked up a career-best 27 birdies, topping his previous high of 26 at the 2011 Memorial Tournament. This year will mark his seventh start.
- **Phil Mickelson** – The World Golf Hall of Fame Member will make his 14th Houston Open start and 11th consecutive. In addition to his 2011 win, Mickelson tied for fourth in 2012 and has finished inside the top 20 ever since with the exception of 2017 (2013/T16, 2014/T12, 2015/T17, 2016/T13, 2017/T55). Among his 43 TOUR wins, four are from the state of Texas (1996 AT&T Byron Nelson, 2000 and 2008 Fort Worth Invitational and 2011 Houston Open).
- **Justin Rose** – After missing the Houston Open in 2016, the Olympic Gold Medalist will make his second consecutive start in the Houston Open (and sixth overall): 2004/MC, 2009/T52, 2010/T14, 2015/T37, 2017/T15.
- **Shubhankar Sharma** – Current Race to Dubai leader and two-time European Tour winner will make his first start at the Houston Open. Will make his third PGA TOUR start (one week before utilizing an exemption to play in the Masters Tournament), finishing T9 at the WGC-Mexico Championship and failing to advance past group play at the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play.

- **Jordan Spieth** – The 11-time PGA TOUR winner will make his sixth start in the Houston Open where his best finish was a playoff loss in 2015. The Texas native has one victory in his home state, the 2016 Fort Worth Invitational at Colonial Country Club.
- **Henrik Stenson** – The 2017 Houston Open runner-up will make his seventh start at the Golf Club of Houston, with three top-three finishes: 2017/MC, 2016/2, 2014/T54, 2013/T2, 2012/T21 and 2009/T3.
- **Steve Stricker** – Recent back-to-back PGA TOUR Champions winner will make his 16th Houston Open start. Enjoyed the most success from 2006-11 (2006/3, 2007/T9, 2008/T11, 2009/MC, 2011/T4).
- **Lee Westwood** – Making his first start on TOUR since a T67 at the 2017 PGA Championship, will make his 12th start at the Houston Open. Three consecutive missed cuts (2015-17) snapped a streak of eight straight made cuts at the Golf Club of Houston and six consecutive top-30 finishes.

Tournament Notes

- The Houston Open has had 23 playoffs—the most for any non-major on the PGA TOUR (U.S. Open/32). Four of the last nine champions have been decided by extra holes (J.B. Holmes/2015, Matt Jones/2014, Anthony Kim/2010 and Paul Casey/2009).
- Since the Houston Open moved to the Tournament Course in 2006, just six third-round leaders/co-leaders have parlayed that position into a win: Jim Herman (2016), Phil Mickelson (2011), Anthony Kim (2010), Paul Casey (2009), Johnson Wagner (2008) and Stuart Appleby (2006).
- Tournament Record: 266 – Vijay Singh (2002), Curtis Strange (1980) and Lee Trevino (1980)
- Current Course Record: 63 – Sung Kang (2017), Scott Piercy (2015), Jimmy Walker (2011), Phil Mickelson (2011), Adam Scott (2008) and Johnson Wagner (2008)
- Largest come-from-behind win: seven shots by Mike Sullivan (1989) and Payne Stewart (1995).
- Vijay Singh is the only player to defend a title at the Houston Open (2004-05). He also won the in 2002, one of only two players to have three Houston Open wins (Curtis Strange/1980, '86, '88).
- Nine players have won the Houston Open multiple times: Curtis Strange (1980, 1986, 1988), Vijay Singh (2002, 2004, 2005), Cary Middlecoff (1950, 1953), Jack Burke Jr. (1952, 1959), Mike Souchak (1955, 1964), Bobby Nichols (1962, 1965), Arnold Palmer (1957, 1966), Bruce Crampton (1973, 1975) and Stuart Appleby (1999, 2006).

Houston Open and the Masters Tournament

Eighteen players are competing at the Houston Open and the following week at the Masters Tournament, with the event offering the final opportunity for players not exempt for the Masters to play their way into the year's first major championship. The list includes

Daniel Berger	Yuta Ikeda	Shubhankar Sharma
Rafa Cabrera Bello	Martin Kaymer	Jordan Spieth
Jason Dufner	Matt Kuchar	Henrik Stenson
Tony Finau	Phil Mickelson	Jhonattan Vegas.
Rickie Fowler	Thomas Pieters	
Dylan Frittelli	Chez Reavie	
Russell Henley	Justin Rose	

In 2008, Johnson Wagner became the first player to capitalize on the win-and-you're-in berth into the Masters Tournament. The last two players to play their way into the Masters Tournament: Russell Henley in 2017 and Jim Herman in 2016.

Four players have won the week prior to the Masters Tournament and then gone on to win in Augusta – Ralph Guldahl (Greater Greensboro Open) in 1939, Art Wall (Azalea Open) in 1959, Sandy Lyle (Greater Greensboro Open) in 1988 and Phil Mickelson (BellSouth Classic) in 2006. Additionally, Sam Snead won the 1949 Greater Greensboro Open and the Masters, the tour's next official event, with one week of separation between the two events.

Since the Houston Open moved to the Golf Club of Houston in 2006, there were only two years the tournament did not directly precede the Masters Tournament (2006 and 2013). Here's a look at how Houston Open winners have fared the next week at Augusta:

Year	Houston winner	Masters Finish
2017	Russell Henley	T11
2016	Jim Herman	MC
2015	J.B. Holmes	MC
2014	Matt Jones	MC
2012	Hunter Mahan	T12
2011	Phil Mickelson	T27
2010	Anthony Kim	3
2009	Paul Casey	T20
2008	Johnson Wagner	T36
2007	Adam Scott	T27