



**2018 Sony Open in Hawaii**  
(10<sup>th</sup> of 44 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

**Honolulu, HI**  
**Waialae Country Club**

**January 11-14, 2018**  
**Par/Yards: 35-35—70/7,044**

**Purse: \$6,200,000 (\$1,116,000)**  
**500 FedExCup points to winner**

### **First-Round Notes – Thursday, January 11, 2018**

#### **Weather**

Partly cloudy. High of 83. Wind ENE 6-12 mph.

#### **First-Round Leaderboard**

|               |         |
|---------------|---------|
| Chris Kirk    | 63 (-7) |
| Zach Johnson  | 63 (-7) |
| Vaughn Taylor | 64 (-6) |
| Kyle Stanley  | 64 (-6) |
| Talor Gooch   | 64 (-6) |
| Brian Harman  | 64 (-6) |

#### **Zach Johnson**

2009 Sony Open in Hawaii champion Zach Johnson opened with three consecutive birdies en route to a bogey-free, 7-under 63, sharing first-round lead honors with Chris Kirk.

The bogey-free round was the 94<sup>th</sup> for Zach Johnson in his PGA TOUR career, representing the third-most since 2004 (Jim Furyk-103, Charles Howell-100).

Johnson has par-or-better scores in 17 of his last 18 rounds at the Sony Open in Hawaii.

R1 at a glance: eight of 14 fairways, 16 of 18 greens, two of two scrambling, 28 putts.

Johnson is making his 13<sup>th</sup> start at Waialae Country Club, with top-10 finishes in 2009 (won), 2014 (T8), 2016 (T9) and 2017 (T6). His best round at the Sony Open in Hawaii is a second-round 9-under 61 in 2017 (T6).

Johnson has finished inside the top-25 in all three of his starts this season: Safeway Open (T13), OHL Classic at Mayakoba (T23), The RSM Classic (T8).

With the exception of 2008 (No. 131), Johnson has finished no worse than No. 57 in the FedExCup standings dating to its inception in 2007.

Johnson has held/shared the first-round lead eight times previously on the PGA TOUR. The only event which produced a victory was the 2012 Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial. Prior to this week, his most recent lead/co-lead came at the 2014 John Deere Classic (2<sup>nd</sup>).

#### **Chris Kirk**

Chris Kirk carded a bogey-free 7-under 63 to share the first-round lead with Zach Johnson. His round included seven birdies, with four in his final six holes (Nos. 13, 15, 16, 18).

Kirk's first-round scoring average at Waialae Country Club is 67.875.

R1 at a glance: 11 of 14 fairways, 15 of 18 greens, three of three scrambling, 27 putts.

Kirk is making his eighth start at the Sony Open in Hawaii, with back-to-back top-five finishes in 2013 (T5) and 2014 (2). He has missed the cut in his last two starts at this event (2016, 2017).

Kirk's score falls one shy of his best score at Waialae Country Club, a second-round 62 in 2013.

This week marks Kirk's sixth start of the season, with a T4 at The RSM Classic his best outing.

Kirk has finished inside the top 100 in the FedExCup standings each season since his rookie year in 2011, led by a second-place finish in 2014. He is currently No. 50 in the standings.

This week marks the fifth time Kirk has held the lead/co-lead on TOUR: 2014 Sentry Tournament of Champions (T16), 2014 TOUR Championship (T4), 2016 OHL Classic at Mayakoba (T7), 2017 The RSM Classic (T4).

### **First-Round Leader Statistics**

Prior to Justin Thomas in 2017, the last first-round leader to go on and win the Sony Open in Hawaii was Ryan Palmer in 2010.

In the first nine events this season, the first-round leader/co-leader has won four times, most recently Patton Kizzire at the OHL Classic at Mayakoba.

### **Justin Thomas**

Defending champion Justin Thomas turned in a bogey-free 3-under 67 to sit T20. A year ago, Thomas opened the Sony Open in Hawaii with an 11-under 59, becoming at the time the seventh player (eight times) to record a sub-60 round on the PGA TOUR.

At the 2017 Sony Open in Hawaii and at the age of 23 years, eight months and 14 days, Thomas became the youngest player in PGA TOUR history to post a sub-60 round, topping David Duval who did so at the 1999 CareerBuilder Challenge at the age of 27 years, two months and 15 days.

Thomas is hoping to become the fifth player to win consecutive Sony Open titles: Hubert Green (1978-79), Corey Pavin (1986-87), Ernie Els (2003-04), Jimmy Walker (2014-15).

### **Additional Player notes**

Playing in the same group as Justin Thomas, Kevin Kisner (T41) carded a 2-under 68. He wore a University of Alabama football jersey on the par-3 17<sup>th</sup> hole during the first round, paying off a wager to Thomas following his Georgia Bulldogs losing to the Crimson Tide in the College Football Playoff National Championship.

Brian Harman sits T3 after an opening-round 6-under 64, marking a TOUR-leading 11<sup>th</sup> time inside of the top-10 after any round on TOUR this season.

Peter Malnati (T7) opened with a bogey-free, 5-under 65, tying his career-low round on TOUR.

Charles Howell III (T20) posted an opening-round 3-under 67, his 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive round in the 60s at the Sony Open in Hawaii and 24<sup>th</sup> out of the last 25. He owns nine top-10 finishes in 16 starts at the Sony Open in Hawaii (T8-2017, T8-2014, T3-2013, T2-2012, T5-2010, 4-2009, T2-2007, T3-2005, T4-2002).

Despite a quadruple-bogey in the par-4 eighth hole, Jordan Spieth (T65) opened with a 1-under 69 in his third start at the Sony Open in Hawaii. It marked the first time in his career he has posted an under-par round that included a quadruple bogey. Spieth's round included eight birdies (the 19<sup>th</sup> time in his career he has eight or more birdies), three bogeys and a quadruple bogey.

J.J. Henry (T131) posted a first-round 3-over 73 as he made his 500<sup>th</sup> PGA TOUR start at the 2018 Sony Open in Hawaii, with a T30 in 2015 the best of his eight starts at Waialae Country Club.

Jimmy Walker (T136) opened with a 4-over 74 in his 12<sup>th</sup> start at the Sony Open in Hawaii, led by wins in 2014 and 2015 and a fourth-place finish in 2011. It marked his worst score at Waialae Country Club since a first-round 5-over 75 in 2010.

### **Miscellaneous Notes**

Since 2012, Waialae Country Club has yielded more rounds of 63 or better by winners than any course played on TOUR (nine rounds). Chris Kirk and Zach Johnson are hoping to add to that total after opening with a 63 Thursday.

Ten players have made the Sony Open in Hawaii their first PGA TOUR win: Ted Makalena (1966), Grier Jones (1972), John Schlee (1973), Gary Groh (1975), Isao Aoki (1983), David Ishii (1990), John Morse (1995), Jerry Kelly (2002), Russell Henley (2013).

Past Sony Open in Hawaii champions in the field: Zach Johnson (T1), Jerry Kelly (T11), Justin Thomas (T20), K.J. Choi (T65), Fabian Gomez (T78), Ryan Palmer (T99), Vijay Singh (T99), Russell Henley (T116), Mark Wilson (T131), Jimmy Walker (T136).

Bogey-free rounds:

R1 – Chris Kirk (63), Zach Johnson (63), Vaughn Taylor (64), Peter Malnati (65), Ryan Blaum (66), Austin Cook (67), Jason Kokrak (67), Justin Thomas (67)

Scoring Averages at the par-70 Waialae Country Club:

|    | <b>Front 9</b> | <b>Back 9</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Cumulative</b> |
|----|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| R1 | 34.618         | 34.590        | 69.208       | ---               |

The par-3 11<sup>th</sup> hole played the toughest during the first round, yielding a 3.292 average. The par-5 18<sup>th</sup> hole was the easiest at 4.236.

**2018 marks 53<sup>rd</sup> playing of Sony Open in Hawaii**

**Longest-running PGA TOUR title sponsors**

|                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| The Honda Classic                 | 1982        |
| AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am          | 1986        |
| <b><i>Sony Open in Hawaii</i></b> | <b>1999</b> |
| John Deere Classic                | 1999        |