



2018 Valspar Championship

(The 18th of 44 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

Palm Harbor, Fla.

March 8-11, 2018

Purse: \$6,500,000 (winner: \$1,170,000)

Innisbrook Resort & GC (Copperhead Course)

Par/Yards: 36-35 - 71/7,340

Second-Round Notes – Friday, March 9, 2018

Weather: A cold start with temperature in the 40s. Sunny with light winds for most of the day, and a high of 66. Wind NNW at 5-10 mph.

Second-Round Leaderboard

Position	Name	Score
1	Corey Conners	67-69—136 (-6)
T2	Paul Casey	70-68—138 (-4)
	Brandt Snedeker	70-68—138 (-4)
	Tiger Woods	70-68—138 (-4)
	Ryan Palmer	72-66—138 (-4)
	Kelly Kraft	68-70—138 (-4)

36-Hole Cut

77 professionals and one amateur at 3-over 145 from a field of 142 professionals and two amateurs.

Friday's 3-over 145 cut matches the highest cut in Valspar Championship history (2003, 2008, 2014, 2016, 2018).

The Valspar Championship is the fourth event this season with an over-par cut (Shriners Hospitals for Children Open/+1, Genesis Open/+2, The Honda Classic/+5, Valspar Championship/+3).

Corey Conners

PGA TOUR rookie and Canada native Corey Conners retained the solo lead he held after round one, with rounds of 67-69—136 (-6) to hold a two-stroke lead over five players, including former FedExCup champions Tiger Woods and Brandt Snedeker. Paul Casey, Ryan Palmer and Kelly Kraft also share second place.

This marks the first time Conners has held the 36-hole lead/co-lead in 21 career starts on the PGA TOUR. Before this week, Conners' best position after any round on the PGA TOUR was T21 at The Honda Classic two weeks ago (T59).

Conners is the first player since Marc Leishman (2017 BMW Championship) to hold the solo lead in both the first and second rounds at a PGA TOUR event.

Conners is the only player in the field with both rounds in the 60s.

Conners, who came into the week as third alternate, received his spot in the field when Kyle Stanley withdrew. He learned of his spot in the field after shooting a 71 in the Monday Qualifier, which would have not been enough to play his way in. The last alternate to win on the PGA TOUR was Vaughn Taylor at the 2016 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Conners is making his 11th start of the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season, with a T29 at the Farmers Insurance Open being his best finish. In 10 starts this season, Conners has failed to advance to the final round once – missing the 54-hole cut at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Conners made his way to the PGA TOUR this season by virtue of a 41st-place finish on the 2017 Web.com Tour priority list. On that Tour in 2017, he claimed three top-10 finishes in 23 starts.

Conners, 26, hails from Listowel, Ontario, Canada and joins fellow Canadian National Team and Kent State Flashes alum Mackenzie Hughes on TOUR this season. Members and alums of the Canadian National Team know each other as 'Dragons'. The Snake Pit (Nos. 16-18) has not derailed either player this week, with Conners completing the six holes in even-par through two rounds and Hughes playing that section of the course in 1-under.

While at Kent State, Connors studied actuary math, which is the study of the financial consequences of risk.

Second-Round Lead Notes

The second-round leader/co-leader has gone on to win four of 17 times this season, most recently Austin Cook at The RSM Classic.

The only second-round leaders/co-leaders of the Valspar Championship to hang on for the win have been K.J. Choi (2002 and 2006), Retief Goosen (2003) and Adam Hadwin (2017).

Paul Casey

Paul Casey shot 3-under 32 on his closing nine holes for a 68 to follow his first-round 70 and sit T2.

Casey is making his seventh PGA TOUR start this season, finishing in the top-20 in five of six starts, including top-10s at the CIMB Classic (T7) and the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am (T8).

This marks Casey's fifth start in the Valspar Championship (2008/T42, 2011/T37, 2012/MC, 2014/MC).

Casey currently sits No. 39 in the FedExCup standings. He's advanced to the season-finale TOUR Championship at East Lake in each of the last three seasons, finishing in the top 15 in the FedExCup each time (11th/2017, 5th/2016, 13th/2015).

Although he owns 14 international wins, Casey's lone victory on the PGA TOUR came at the 2009 Houston Open.

Brandt Snedeker

Friday's 68 marked Snedeker's first round in the 60s in this event since a third-round 67 in 2012. He's now posted 11 of 32 rounds in the 60s at the Valspar Championship.

Snedeker's only blemish on the scorecard in the second round was a bogey at the par-3 8th hole. He also bogeyed No. 8 in the opening round.

Snedeker's record in eight previous starts at the Innisbrook Resort's Copperhead Course include two top-10s (4th/2011, T8/2008) and seven made cuts (MC/2009).

The best result for Snedeker in six PGA TOUR starts this season is T20 at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, where he strung together four sub-par rounds.

Snedeker, the 2012 FedExCup champion, is one of two FedExCup winners in the top 10 at the Valspar Championship (Tiger Woods/2007, 2009).

Snedeker is also one of 13 players to have advanced to the FedExCup Playoffs in 11 consecutive seasons since the FedExCup Playoffs were established in 2007. The 12 other players are Charley Hoffman, Matt Kuchar, Charles Howell III, Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Bill Haas, Zach Johnson, Phil Mickelson, Adam Scott, Ryan Moore, Luke Donald and Bubba Watson.

Tiger Woods

In his first appearance at the Valspar Championship, Tiger Woods dropped a shot at his final hole (No. 9) to shoot a second-round 3-under 68 to sit T2 after 36 holes. The lone bogey of his round came when he missed the green from 114 yards out of the left rough and failed to convert a 6-foot putt to save par. Woods was seeking his first bogey-free round on the PGA TOUR since the final round of The Greenbrier Classic in 2015 (3-under 67/finished T32).

Woods took the solo-lead in the Valspar Championship at 5-under through 14 holes of the second round just before noon (ET). The last time Woods held a solo lead at the end of a round on the PGA TOUR was at the conclusion of the 2013 World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational, winning by seven strokes, his most recent of 79 victories. The last time he held a share of the lead at the end of a round was after round two of the 2015 Wyndham Championship.

In the second round, Woods hit 8 of 13 fairways, 11 of 18 greens in regulation and got up-and-down 6 of 7 times. He used 26 putts to hole a total of 57 feet, 7 inches of putts and improved his proximity to the hole on approach shots from 44 feet in round one to 34 feet, 7 inches in round two.

It's the first time since the 2015 Wyndham Championship (64-65) that Woods has opened an official PGA TOUR event with consecutive under-par rounds.

In the first round, Woods played the "Snake Pit" holes, Nos. 16-18 in 1-under (par-birdie-par). He made three pars on the same holes in Friday's second round.

Woods is making his fourth start of the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season; T23/Farmers Insurance Open, MC/Genesis Open and 12th/The Honda Classic.

Woods is searching for his 80th career PGA TOUR title and first win since the 2013 World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational. His last top-10 finish, a T10, came at the 2015 Wyndham Championship.

Of 79 PGA TOUR wins in 331 starts, 16 have come in the state of Florida (more than any other state).

In 40 PGA TOUR tournament debuts, Woods has won nine times. The last time Woods won an TOUR event in his first start was the 1998 World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship.

With Phil Mickelson winning last week's WGC-Mexico Championship, and Woods in contention to win the Valspar Championship this week, a victory by Woods would mark the 11th time the duo have won in consecutive weeks on the PGA TOUR (either Mickelson/Woods or Woods/Mickelson). The last time Woods won the week after a Mickelson victory was 2008 (Mickelson/Genesis Open, Woods/WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play).

Ryan Palmer

After a first-round 72, Ryan Palmer mixed six birdies with one bogey in round two for a 5-under 66 to sit T2. Friday's 66 marks his low 18-hole score in 30 rounds at this event.

Palmer has a lone top-25 finish in eight previous appearances at the Valspar Championship (T25/2006).

Palmer lost a three-man playoff earlier this year at the Farmers Insurance Open, eliminated at the first extra hole before darkness fell. Jason Day eventually defeated Alex Noren at the sixth extra hole on Monday morning.

Palmer headed into the Valspar Championship off consecutive missed cuts in his last two starts – the Waste Management Phoenix Open and The Honda Classic.

Palmer began the 2017-18 season on a Major Medical Extension, with six events available to earn the necessary 29 points to equal No. 125 J.J. Henry's 365-point total from the 2017 FedExCup points list. In his second start of the season at the CareerBuilder Challenge, he finished T20 and earned 37.55 points to retain full eligibility through the end of the season.

Kelly Kraft

With 68-70 in the first two rounds, Kelly Kraft opened a PGA TOUR event with two sub-par rounds for the first time since The RSM Classic earlier this season (70-65) to sit T2 in his second start at the Valspar Championship (T65/2017).

Kraft, who missed the cut in four of his last six starts, comes to this week's Valspar Championship after finishing T8 at The Honda Classic two weeks ago.

Kraft made a return to the PGA TOUR this season by virtue of a 72nd-place finish on last season's FedExCup points list.

In 71 TOUR starts, Kraft's closest brush with victory was a solo-second at the 2017 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Miscellaneous Notes

During rounds of 71-68, 2008 Valspar Championship winner Sean O'Hair recorded 10 birdies (most of any player in the field) and an eagle in 36 holes at the Valspar Championship. The eagle came at the par-4 6th in the second round when he holed out from 193 yards, his third career hole-out from outside 190 yards on the PGA TOUR.

52-year-old Bob Estes posted a pair of 70s to sit T12. Estes, a four-time TOUR winner entered the 2017-18 season on a Major Medical Extension with eight available events to earn 300 FedExCup points or \$479,415 to remain exempt for the remainder of the season. His injury dates back to 2013-14 season that limited him to just two starts that year. Estes only other start this season resulted in a missed cut at The Honda Classic. Estes finished T5 at last week's Cologuard Classic, his first start of the season on PGA TOUR Champions. It was his third top-10 in 10 starts since turning 50 in February 2016.

Of the four Monday qualifiers, three advanced to the weekend (T.J. Vogel/T38, Trey Mullinax/T12, Jack Maguire/MC and Sam Ryder/T59).

South Africa's Tyrone Van Aswegen fired a bogey-free, second-round 65, the low round of the tournament, to sit T12. Van Aswegen played the first nine holes of his opening round in 4-over 40. This marked the second year in a row that Van Aswegen scored 65 in the second round at the Valspar Championship. It also marks the ninth time he's shot 65, his career low 18-hole score on TOUR.

With 122 non-member FedExCup points to his credit this season, Sam Burns, who was paired with Tiger Woods in the final round of The Honda Classic two weeks ago to finish T8, can seek Special Temporary Membership of the PGA TOUR if he matches the points earned by the player at No. 150 in last season's FedExCup standings (269 by Rick Lamb). Burns, currently T12, would need a two-way tie for third or better to surpass 269 FedExCup non-member points.

Defending Valspar Championship winner Adam Hadwin sits T20 after rounds of 71-70. En route to his win last year, Hadwin held a one-stroke lead over Jim Herman, at 10-under after 36 holes.

Following rounds of 76-71, 2015 Valspar Championship winner Jordan Spieth missed the cut for the first time in five starts at this event.

In his first start at the Valspar Championship, Rory McIlroy posted a total of four birdies during rounds of 74-73 to miss the cut, his 18th missed cut in 135 career starts on TOUR.

One of the two amateurs competing in this week's Valspar Championship advanced to the weekend. University of Illinois senior Dylan Meyer recorded 70-74 to extend his stay at Innisbrook, while Georgia Tech sophomore Ty Strafaci missed the cut (75-76).

This week's Valspar Championship marks the last chance for players to get inside the top 64 in the Official World Golf Rankings and qualify for the World Golf Championships-Dell Technologies Match Play. The event will be contested the week of March 19-25 at Austin Country Club in Austin, Texas.

Nine past champions of the Valspar Championship in this week's field; Adam Hadwin/2017 (T20), Charl Schwartzel/2016 (T38), Jordan Spieth/2015 (MC), Kevin Streelman/2013 (MC), Luke Donald/2012 (T59), Gary Woodland/2011 (MC), Jim Furyk/2010 (T38), Retief Goosen/2009, 2003 (MC) and Sean O'Hair/2008 (T7).

The last eight winners of the Valspar Championship all finished the season of their win inside the top 30 in FedExCup standings and advanced through all four FedExCup Playoffs events, highlighted by Jim Furyk (2010) and Jordan Spieth (2015), who went on to win FedExCup title the year of their win in Palm Harbor.

Charles Howell III extended his number of 36-hole cuts made at the Valspar Championship to 12 (15 starts), the most of any player at this event.

After missing the cut in his last four starts at the Valspar Championship, World Golf Hall of Fame member Ernie Els (71-74) advanced to the weekend on the number. It's the 359th made cut in 451 career starts on TOUR for Els (80%).

Although Brian Gay missed the cut, he made his 17th appearance in the tournament, the most of any player, breaking a tie with two-time Valspar Championship winner K.J. Choi.

Bryson DeChambeau withdrew with a sore back before the second round.

Bogey-free rounds:

R1: Jimmy Walker (69), Luke Donald (70).

R2: Tyrone Van Aswegen (65), Aaron Wise (67), Bill Haas (68).

Scoring Averages at the par-71 Copperhead Course:

	Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
R1	36.931	35.931	72.861	--
R2	36.930	35.357	72.287	72.574

Cumulative Snake Pit Statistics:

Hole	Rank	Scoring Average
16	1	4.317
17	5	3.192
18	4	4.199

AM Scoring Average: R1	72.74	R2:	72.45
PM Scoring Average: R1	72.99	R2:	72.70

For the second consecutive round, the par-4 16th hole was the hardest with an average of 4.294 in round two. The easiest hole for the second day in a row was the par-5 11th, which played to an average of 4.671 on Friday.