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**World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational pre-tournament notes**

**Field:** There are 73 players officially committed.

**Dates:** August 2-5, 2018

**Where:** Firestone Country Club (South Course), Akron, Ohio

**Par/Yards:** 35-35—70 /7,400

**Architect:** Bert Way (1929), Robert Trent Jones (1960)

**Qualification/Eligibility requirements:**

- Playing members of the 2017 U.S. and International Presidents Cup teams.
- The top 50 players, including any tied for 50th place, from the OWGR as of Monday, July 23, 2018
- The top 50 players, including any tied for 50th place, from the OWGR as of Monday, July 30, 2018
- Tournament winners, whose victories are considered official, of tournaments from the Federation Tours since the prior year's World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational with an Official World Golf Ranking strength of field rating of 115 points or more.
- The winner of the following tournaments from each of the following Tours:
  - Japan Golf Tour: Japan Golf Tour Championship (2018) and Bridgestone Open (2017)
  - Australasian Tour: Australian PGA Championship (2017)
  - Southern Africa Tour: Dimension Data Pro-Am (2018)
  - Asian Tour: Indonesian Masters (2017)

**FedExCup Points:** 550

**Purse:** \$10,000,000; **Winner's Share:** \$1,700,000

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play; no cut

**Defending Champion:** Hideki Matsuyama, 264 (-16)

**Trophy:** Gary Player Cup

**Website:** [www.worldgolfchampionships.com](http://www.worldgolfchampionships.com)

**Twitter:** @WGC\_Bridgestone

**How the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational was won in 2017**

Hideki Matsuyama shot a final-round 9-under 61, his career low on the PGA TOUR, to come from two strokes behind to claim his second career World Golf Championships title and fifth PGA TOUR title in his 100<sup>th</sup> start at the age of 25 years, 5 months, 12 days. Matsuyama's 61 tied the tournament record for an 18-hole score with Tiger Woods (2000, 2013) and Sergio Garcia (2014). Following an eagle-three at the second hole, Matsuyama reeled off seven birdies including three-straight on his final three holes, good for the five-stroke win over Zach Johnson at 16-under 264. Charley Hoffman, who lost in a playoff at the previous week's RBC Canadian Open, finished third at 10-under 270.

**More on Hideki Matsuyama**

- Win at the 2017 WGC-Bridgestone gave him the FedExCup standings lead, which he held through the end of the regular season (Wyndham Championship).
- Became one of three players to achieve the "Ohio Double," winning both the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide in Dublin and the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.
- With three wins and a career-high eighth in the final FedExCup standings, enjoyed his most successful season on the PGA TOUR (four seasons).
- Enters the 2018 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational at 86<sup>th</sup> in the FedExCup standings with top-10 finishes this season at the CIMB Classic (T5) and Sentry Tournament of Champions (T4).
- In five career appearances at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, 2017 victory is his only top-10 finish in the event. Next best result is a T12/2014.
- Is one of 14 players with two or more victories in a World Golf Championships event.
- Owns a 70.44 scoring average in 20 rounds at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.

## Field notes

- 550 FedExCup points awarded to the winner.
- All 10 of the top 10 (and 29 of the top 30) in the current FedExCup standings.
- All 50 of the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking in the field.
- Since the FedExCup's 2007 inception, the winner of the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational has advanced to the TOUR Championship all but once (Shane Lowry/2015): Hideki Matsuyama (2017), Dustin Johnson (2016), Rory McIlroy (2014), Tiger Woods (2013, 2009, 2007), Keegan Bradley (2012), Adam Scott (2011), Hunter Mahan (2010) and Vijay Singh (2008). Woods, in 2007 and 2009, and Singh, in 2008, captured both the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational and the FedExCup.
- The field includes 19 major championship winners who have combined for 44 total major victories, led by Tiger Woods with 14.
- Of the 73 players in the field, 53 have won on the PGA TOUR.
- Fifteen players in this week's field have won World Golf Championships events:

<b>Player</b>	<b>World Golf Championship Wins</b>
• Tiger Woods	18 (1999 Bridgestone Invitational, Mexico Championship, 2000 Bridgestone Invitational, 2001 Bridgestone Invitational, 2002 Mexico Championship, 2003 Dell Technologies Match Play, Mexico Championship, 2004 Dell Technologies Match Play, 2005 Bridgestone Invitational, Mexico Championship, 2006 Bridgestone Invitational, Mexico Championship, 2007 Mexico Championship, Bridgestone Invitational, 2008 Dell Technologies Match Play, 2009 Bridgestone Invitational, 2013 Mexico Championship, Bridgestone Invitational)
• Dustin Johnson	5 (2013 HSBC Champions, 2015 Mexico Championship, 2016 Bridgestone Invitational, 2017 Mexico Championship, 2017 Dell Technologies Match Play)
• Phil Mickelson	3 (2009 HSBC Champions, 2009, 2018 Mexico Championship)
• Jason Day	2 (2014 & 2016 Dell Technologies Match Play)
• Hideki Matsuyama	2 (2016 HSBC Champions, 2017 Bridgestone Invitational)
• Rory McIlroy	2 (2014 Bridgestone Invitational, 2015 Dell Technologies Match Play)
• Ian Poulter	2 (2010 Dell Technologies Match Play, 2012 HSBC Champions)
• Justin Rose	2 (2012 Mexico Championship, 2017 HSBC Champions)
• Adam Scott	2 (2011 Bridgestone Invitational, 2016 Mexico Championship)
• Russell Knox	1 (2015 HSBC Champions)
• Matt Kuchar	1 (2013 Dell Technologies Match Play)
• Francesco Molinari	1 (2010 HSBC Champions)
• Patrick Reed	1 (2014 Mexico Championship)
• Henrik Stenson	1 (2007 Dell Technologies Match Play)
• Bubba Watson	1 (2014 HSBC Champions, 2018 Dell Technologies Match Play)

## Select Player Notes

### Dustin Johnson

- With three wins on the season following his victory at the RBC Canadian Open, enters the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational as the FedExCup standings leader and the No.1-ranked player in the world.
- Owns 19 PGA TOUR victories, including wins at the 2018 Sentry Tournament of Champions, FedEx St. Jude Classic and RBC Canadian Open.
- Has won at least once in each of the 11 seasons he has been on TOUR, the best current streak on TOUR. His win at last week's RBC Canadian Open marked the third consecutive season with at least three victories on the PGA TOUR.
- Became the first player to win each of the four World Golf Championships events, with the 2017 Dell Technologies Match Play title completing the 'WGC Slam'. Johnson's WGC victories came at the HSBC Champions (2013), the Mexico Championship (2015), the Bridgestone Invitational (2016) and the Mexico Championship (2017). Although Tiger Woods has 18 WGC titles, he failed to collect the HSBC Champions trophy, where he finished T6 in 2009 and 2010 in his only two appearances.
- Owns second-most wins in the World Golf Championships series with five.
- The 2016 champion is scheduled to make his ninth start in the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational. Previous-best result before his victory was 15th in 2010. He added a T17 finish in 2017.

## **Tiger Woods**

- Eight-time WGC-Bridgestone Invitational champion qualified for the 2018 event by virtue of moving inside the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking by June 23. T6 finish at The Open Championship moved him from No. 71 to 50 in the rankings.
- A ninth win would give Woods the most victories at the same venue in PGA TOUR history.
- With 79 career PGA TOUR victories, is second all-time behind Sam Snead (82). Woods' most recent PGA TOUR victory came at the 2013 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.
- Last competed at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational in 2014, when he withdrew during the final round. This week also represents his most recent start in any World Golf Championships event.
- In 12 starts this season, has compiled four top-10 finishes, including a season-best T2 at the Valspar Championship.
- Currently No. 47 in the FedExCup standings.
- Woods' results at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational at Firestone Country Club:
  - 1999 – Win
  - 2000 – Win
  - 2001 – Win
  - 2003 – T4
  - 2004 – T2
  - 2005 – Win
  - 2006 – Win
  - 2007 – Win
  - 2009 – Win
  - 2010 – T78
  - 2011 – T37
  - 2012 – T8
  - 2013 – Win
  - 2014 – W/D

## **Francesco Molinari**

- Captured The Open Championship to become the first major champion from Italy. The win at Carnoustie Golf Links was his second official PGA TOUR victory after winning the Quicken Loans National two starts prior.
- Has one World Golf Championships victory to his credit, (2010 HSBC Champions).
- His Open win propelled him to No. 7 in the FedExCup standings and to No. 6 in the OWGR, marking his first time to be inside the top 10 in the OWGR.
- Was 122<sup>nd</sup> in the FedExCup standings following the U.S. Open, but quickly rose to No. 42 with his Quicken Loans National victory. T2 finish at the John Deere Classic the week before The Open moved him to No. 27.
- In seven previous starts at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, has finished no higher than T15 (2011).

## **Justin Rose**

- World No. 2 poised to make his 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational dating to 2007.
- Owns four top-5 finishes in Akron, with a T2 in his first appearance of 2007 representing his best finish.
- Heading into the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, finished T2 at The Open after shooting rounds of 64-69 on the weekend at Carnoustie Golf Links.
- Won the first World Golf Championships event of the season at the HSBC Champions in October. Overcame an eight-stroke deficit to Dustin Johnson in the final round, a World Golf Championships record. Victory in Shanghai was his second career World Golf Championships victory. First won the 2012 Mexico Championship (at Doral).
- Added a second win this season at the Fort Worth Invitational, the second time in his career he has collected multiple victories on the PGA TOUR (2010).
- Currently No. 3 in the FedExCup standings, with his best finish in the season-long race being a fifth-place result in 2011.

## **Rory McIlroy**

- Following a runner-up result at The Open Championship, moved inside the top 30 in the FedExCup standings to No. 24.
- Winner of 14 PGA TOUR events, won the 2018 Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, his first victory on TOUR since the 2016 TOUR Championship.
- In his first start back at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational since winning in 2014, posted four rounds in the 60s last season to finish T5.
- In seven previous appearances at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, has finished inside the top 10 on five occasions.
- Lowest round at Firestone CC is a 64 he shot in the second round en route to the title in 2014.

### **Justin Thomas**

- Defending FedExCup champion is currently No. 2 in the FedExCup standings behind Dustin Johnson.
- Owns two wins and one runner-up finish this season (P1/THE CJ CUP @ NINE BRIDGES, P1/The Honda Classic, P2/WGC-Mexico Championship).
- Finished in the top five in the two World Golf Championships events he's competed in this season (P2/Mexico Championship, 4/Dell Technologies Match Play).
- Grabbed the No. 1 spot in the Official World Golf Ranking earlier this season following THE PLAYERS Championship, which he held for four weeks before relinquishing it back to Dustin Johnson.
- Making his third start at Firestone CC, having finished T33 (2016) and T28 (2017).

### **Bubba Watson**

- Winner of the most recent World Golf Championships event at the Dell Technologies Match Play.
- Joins Dustin Johnson as a three-time winner on the PGA TOUR this season (Genesis Open, WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play, Travelers Championship), bringing his career total to 12 victories.
- Comes into the week at No. 4 in the FedExCup standings.
- Seeking to become the first left-handed player to win the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational. Watson (2014 HSBC Champions, 2018 Dell Technologies Match Play), Phil Mickelson (2009 Mexico Championship) and Mike Weir (2000 Mexico Championship) are the only lefties to win World Golf Championships events.
- Is making his ninth appearance at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational. He finished second in 2015 for his best result. The only other time he was in the top 15 at Firestone was a T14 in 2016.

### **Jason Day**

- Owns 12 PGA TOUR victories after adding two during the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season (Farmers Insurance Open, Wells Fargo Championship).
- Sits fifth in the FedExCup standings, thanks to two victories and a runner-up at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. The 2016 PLAYERS Champion also added a T5 at the 2018 event.
- In search of his third World Golf Championships victory after capturing both the 2014 and 2016 Dell Technologies Match Play.
- Is making his ninth start at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational. Was T3 in 2016 with T4 in 2011 his only two top-10 results at Firestone.

### **Additional Player Notes**

#### **Zach Johnson**

- Finished solo second in the 2017 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, his best finish in 14 starts and fifth career top-10 finish in a WGC event.
- Owns a 69.61 scoring average in 56 rounds at Firestone CC.
- The 12-time PGA TOUR winner is in search of his first victory since the 2015 Open Championship.
- Was in the final group on Saturday at this year's Open Championship, before rounds of 72-74 on the weekend left him in a tie for 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Tony Finau**

- Is making his first start in the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational this week but has competed in each of the season's first three World Golf Championships events.
- Currently ranked No. 10 in the FedExCup standings, despite not having collected a victory on the season.
- Best finishes include two runner-up results at the season-opening Safeway Open and the Genesis Open.
- Produced top-10 results in the year's first three majors: Masters Tournament (T10), U.S. Open (5), The Open (T9).
- Utah native has one PGA TOUR victory to his credit (2016 Puerto Rico Open).

#### **Phil Mickelson**

- Forty-three time PGA TOUR champion has not missed the Bridgestone Invitational since the event was instituted in 1999 and will make his 20<sup>th</sup> appearance.
- In first four starts, posted a runner-up/1999, T4/2000, T8/2001 and T9/2002, but has finished in the top 10 just once since those four-consecutive top-10s (T4/2008).
- Grabbed his third career World Golf Championships title at the 2018 Mexico Championship, where he outlasted Justin Thomas in a playoff. It ended a 96-event winless drought on the PGA TOUR.
- At 47 years, 8 months, 16 days at the time of his win, Mickelson became the oldest player to win a World Golf Championships event.

#### **Aaron Wise**

- The 22-year-old is making his first-ever start in a World Golf Championships event.

- In the midst of his rookie season, captured the 2018 AT&T Byron Nelson for his first career PGA TOUR victory.
- Is the youngest player in the field by one month (6/21/96), narrowly edging India's Shubhankar Sharma (7/21/96).

#### **Brooks Koepka**

- Successfully defended his U.S. Open title at Shinnecock Hills, his third career PGA TOUR title.
- Scheduled to make his fourth appearance at Firestone. With a T6 finish in his tournament debut of 2015, was the only player to record four foudns in the 60s (69-69-68-69) at Firestone CC.
- With eight career rounds at Firestone, holds the fourth-lowest scoring average at 69.00.

#### **Tommy Fleetwood**

- Has yet to win on the PGA TOUR, but has four top-10 finishes in 12 starts this season. Best among them is a T2 in the U.S. Open, where the Englishman carded a final-round 63.
- Only other runner-up finish on the PGA TOUR came at the 2017 WGC-Mexico Championship.
- Five-time European Tour champion is coming off his Race to Dubai win in 2017.

#### **Byeong Hun An**

- Qualified as the last player in the field by virtue of climbing into the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking as of Monday, July 30. An finished T2 at the RBC Canadian Open to jump from No. 61 to No. 40 in the rankings.

#### **Most World Golf Championships appearances (not counting this week)**

##### **(Mexico Championship, Dell Technologies Match Play, Bridgestone Invitational and HSBC Champions)**

Westwood, Lee	58
Garcia, Sergio	55
Mickelson, Phil	54
Scott, Adam	51
Furyk, Jim	49
Els, Ernie	47
Casey, Paul	45
Woods, Tiger	44
Johnson, Zach	42
Poulter, Ian	42
Harrington, Pdraig	41
Rose, Justin	41

#### **Countries, players represented in the field**

Total players in the field – 73

Countries represented – 19

USA	32
ENG	7
AUS	5
RSA	5
JPN	4
ESP	3
SWE	3
IND	2
KOR	2
ARG	1
CAN	1
CHN	1
IRE	1
ITA	1
SCO	1
DEN	1
NIR	1
THA	1
VEN	1

#### **First-time WGC-Bridgestone Invitational participants**

There are 17 players participating in their first-ever WGC-Bridgestone Invitational this week, including seven (bold) who will make their World Golf Championships debut:

**Jaco Ahlers, Alexander Bjork**, Patrick Cantlay, **Austin Cook**, Paul Dunne, Tony Finau, **Kodai Ichihara**, Patton Kizzire, **Andrew Landry**, Haotong Li, Luke List, Wade Ormsby, Shubhankar Sharma, Cameron Smith, Brandon Stone, **Ryuko Tokimatsu, Aaron Wise**.

### Tournament notes

- The best 18-hole score at Firestone CC during the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational is 9-under 61, twice by Tiger Woods (2000, 2013) and most recently by Sergio Garcia (2014). Each of the 61s came in the second round.
- Tiger Woods owns the tournament record of 259 (21-under) which he posted in 2000. His 11-stroke win that year is also the largest winning margin in tournament history. Matsuyama's 264 total in 2017 is the third-lowest 72-hole total, behind Adam Scott (263) and Woods.
- In 2017, Hideki Matsuyama set the lowest final-round score in a World Golf Championships event with a 9-under 61.
- A playoff to decide the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational has been required twice. Tiger Woods won both, defeating Jim Furyk in 2001 and Stewart Cink in 2006.
- Six aces have been recorded in tournament history with three coming in 2000 (Hal Sutton, Retief Goosen, Stewart Cink). Hudson Swafford claimed the most recent hole-in-one, at the 15<sup>th</sup> hole in 2017.
- Phil Mickelson, who at 47 years, 8 months, 16 days won the 2018 Mexico Championship, is the oldest winner in World Golf Championships history. Patrick Reed is the youngest winner of any World Golf Championships event. He won the 2014 Mexico Championship at 23 years, 7 months, 4 days. Tiger Woods is the youngest winner of the Bridgestone Invitational, claiming the title in 1999 at 23 years, 7 months, 30 days.
- Since 1984, professional golf tournaments at Firestone Country Club have given more than \$27 million to charities in Northeast Ohio.

Here is a look at the leading scoring averages of players who have at least eight rounds at Firestone Country Club during the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational since 1999 (does not include Sahalee in 2002). \*A full list is in the tournament media guide.

Rank	Player	Scoring Avg.	Rounds
1	Keegan Bradley	68.15	20
2	Tiger Woods	68.34	59
3	Rory McIlroy	68.82	28
4	Brooks Koepka	69.00	8
5	Jim Furyk	69.12	68

### Major champions and Firestone Country Club

Major champions Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Vijay Singh, Greg Norman, Adam Scott, Rory McIlroy, Dustin Johnson, Raymond Floyd, Arnold Palmer and Ken Venturi have all recorded victories at Firestone Country Club. Since 1994, only two players (Shane Lowry and Hunter Mahan) have been victorious at Firestone Country Club's South Course who hadn't won, or didn't go on to win, a major championship.

### Jim Nantz

Jim Nantz has been named the 2018 Ambassador of Golf by Northern Ohio Golf Charities. The Ambassador of Golf Award is presented annually at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational to a person who has fostered the ideals of the game on an international level and whose concern for others extends beyond the golf course. Nantz will be honored in the Firestone Country Club clubhouse on Wednesday, August 1 at 6:00 p.m. Nantz joins an illustrious list of Ambassador of Golf Award winners: 1981 Chi Chi Rodriguez; 1982 Bing Crosby; 1983 Byron Nelson; 1984 Gene Sarazen; 1985 President Gerald Ford; 1986 Bob Hope; 1987 Dinah Shore; 1988 Joe Dey; 1989 Frank Chirkinian; 1990 Barbara Nicklaus; 1991 Arnold Palmer; 1992 Nancy Lopez; 1993 Roberto De Vincenzo; 1994 President George H.W. Bush; 1995 Michael Bonnallack; 1996 Deane Beman; 1997 Peter Thomson; 1998 Ken Venturi; 1999 Gary Player; 2000 Ben Hogan and Sam Snead; 2001 Del de Windt; 2002 Joanne Carner; 2003 Robert Dedman, Sr. and Jack Vickers; 2004 Lee Trevino; 2005 Pete Dye; 2006 Ken Schofield; 2007 Tony Jacklin; 2008 Charlie Sifford; 2009 Hale Irwin; 2010 Tom Watson; 2011 Nick Price; 2012 Nick Faldo; 2013 Jack Nicklaus; 2014 Johnny Miller; 2015 Judy Rankin; 2016 Davis Love III and 2017 Peter Jacobsen.