



**2018 World Golf Championships–Mexico Championship**  
(The 17<sup>th</sup> of 44 events in the PGA TOUR Season)

**Mexico City, Mexico**  
**Club de Golf Chapultepec**

**March 1 - 4, 2018**

**Purse: \$10,000,000**  
**Par/Yards: 71/7,345**

**Third-Round Notes – Saturday, March 03, 2018**

*Weather: Mostly sunny skies with a high of 78. Light E/NE winds at 5-10 mph.*

*Note: Elevation is a factor at Club de Golf Chapultepec. According to ShotLink mapping data, the lowest part of the course is 7,603 feet above sea level and the highest part of the course is 7,835 feet above sea level.*

**Third-Round Leaderboard**

Shubhankar Sharma	65-66-69 – 200 (-13)
Tyrrell Hatton	70-68-64 – 202 (-11)
Phil Mickelson	69-68-65 – 202 (-11)
Sergio Garcia	68-65-69 – 202 (-11)
Rafa Cabrera Bello	66-67-69 – 202 (-11)

**Shubhankar Sharma**

In his first PGA TOUR and World Golf Championships appearance, India's Shubhankar Sharma, grabbed the 54-hole lead with a 2-under 69 that included five birdies to two bogeys. The 21-year-old led by as much as four strokes during the third round after making three birdies through his first six holes before a bogey on the par-4 eighth, which led to a front-nine 33.

Sharma carded two birdies and two bogeys on the back nine, including a bounce-back birdie on the par-4 14<sup>th</sup> from 16 feet, but capped it off with a 13-footer for par on the 18<sup>th</sup> hole to preserve his two-stroke cushion heading into the final round.

The current leader of the European Tour's Race to Dubai and the Asian Tour's Habitat for Humanity standings, Sharma held a five-stroke lead after 54 holes of the 2017 Joburg Open and won by three after a final-round 69. Two months later at the 2018 Maybank Championship, a final-round 62 erased a four-stroke deficit for his second European Tour title.

Sharma qualified for the 2018 WGC-Mexico Championship by virtue of being inside the top 10 in the European Tour's Race to Dubai standings as of Feb. 19, 2018 (1<sup>st</sup>).

Sharma hit 11 of 14 fairways – his highest total of the week – and 10 of 18 greens in regulation during his third round.

With a win, Sharma, the youngest player in this week's field, would become the youngest player to win a World Golf Championships event at 21 years, 7 months, 11 days. He would eclipse Patrick Reed, who captured the 2014 WGC-Mexico Championship at 23 years, 7 months, 4 days.

The best result by an Indian golfer in the World Golf Championships event is by Jeev Milkha Singh, who finished fourth at the 2009 WGC-Mexico Championship. Hideki Matsuyama of Japan is the only Asian golfer to win a World Golf Championships event when he triumphed at the 2016 WGC-HSBC Champions in China which he followed up with a second victory at the 2017 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.

The last player to win in his PGA TOUR debut was Jim Benepe at the 1988 Beatrice Western Open.

### **Third-Round Leader Stats**

Eight of 16 third-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win on the PGA TOUR this season, most recently Bubba Watson at the Genesis Open.

Since 1999, the 54-hole leader/co-leader has converted the victory at the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship 11 times with the most recent in 2014 (Patrick Reed).

Last year, Justin Thomas held a one-shot lead over eventual champion Dustin Johnson through 54 holes. Thomas carded a final-round 72 to finish T5.

### **Phil Mickelson**

Phil Mickelson fired a bogey-free 6-under 65 in the third round and needed just 24 putts to jump into a tie for second at 11-under, two back of the lead. Beginning the round with four birdies in his first seven holes to turn in 31, Mickelson added two more at the par-4 12<sup>th</sup> and the gettable par-5 15<sup>th</sup> to put himself in contention heading into the final round.

After taking last week off, Mickelson is looking to continue a streak of three consecutive top-10 finishes on the PGA TOUR (T5/Waste Management Phoenix Open, T2/AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, T6/Genesis Open). The last time Mickelson had four consecutive top-10 finishes on the PGA TOUR was in 2005 (1/Waste Management Phoenix Open, 1/AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, T9/WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play, 2/Ford Championship at Doral).

With a win, Mickelson would become the oldest winner of a World Golf Championships event at 47 years, 8 months, 16 days, supplanting Vijay Singh, who captured the 2008 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational at 45 years, 5 months, 12 days. Ernie Els, aged 40 years, 4 months, 25 days in 2010, is the oldest winner of the WGC-Mexico Championship.

A 42-time winner on the PGA TOUR, Mickelson is looking for his first victory since the 2013 Open Championship – a 96-event drought.

Mickelson is one of four past champions of the WGC-Mexico Championship in the field this week. He captured the 2009 event played at Trump National Doral.

### **Tyrell Hatton**

England's Tyrell Hatton fired a bogey-free 7-under 64, which included five birdies on the front nine, to move into a tie for second after 54 holes. Hatton is making his third start of the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season (T11/WGC-HSBC Champions, CUT/The Honda Classic) and his second appearance at the WGC-Mexico Championship.

Hatton collected seven total birdies in the third round, converting putts from inside eight feet on the first, second, eighth and 15th holes. The 26-year-old hit 10 of 14 fairways and 14 of 18 greens in regulation and required just 25 putts after needing 31 and 30 in the first two rounds, respectively.

In six previous WGC appearances, Hatton owns three top-20 results. His best finish was solo 10<sup>th</sup> in his first appearance at Club de Golf Chapultepec a year ago. In 25 previous starts on the PGA TOUR, Hatton's best finish is a tie for fourth, coming at both the 2017 Honda Classic and Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard.

On the European Tour, Hatton is a three-time winner, having captured the 2016 and 2017 Alfred Dunhill Links Championship, as well as the 2017 Italian Open. He qualified for the 2018 WGC-Mexico Championship by virtue of being inside the top 20 in the final Race to Dubai standings (5<sup>th</sup>).

### **Sergio Garcia**

Sergio Garcia shot a third-round 69 that began with birdies on his first two holes, but the Spaniard quickly cooled with a bogey at the third hole and another bogey at the 10<sup>th</sup>. Garcia then rebounded later on the back nine with birdies on Nos. 13 and 15 to move back into a tie for second.

Garcia is making his second start of the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season after opening with a T33 finish at last week's The Honda Classic. While his last victory on the PGA TOUR came at the 2017 Masters, Garcia has already visited the winner's circle in 2018, with a victory at the Asian Tour's SMBC Singapore Open in late January.

With 54 career World Golf Championships appearances, Garcia is in search of his first victory in the four-tournament series. Garcia's best finish came at the 2014 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, where he carded a second-round 61 en route to a runner-up result. A win in Mexico City would also make him the first Spaniard to capture a World Golf Championships event.

Garcia finished T12 in his first appearance at Club de Golf Chapultepec a year ago.

### **Rafa Cabrera Bello**

Spain's Rafa Cabrera Bello rallied late in his round of 2-under 69 with three birdies over his closing seven holes to stay in a tie for second. Seeking his first World Golf Championships and PGA TOUR victory, he bogeyed the opening hole where he was the only player in the top-16 of the leaderboard to drop a shot on that hole during the third round.

After making birdies on the second and sixth holes, Cabrera Bello bogeyed 10 and 11 to fall to 1-over for the day. He then holed putts of 17 feet, 10 feet and 18 feet at the 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> holes, respectively, to finish strong. After three rounds, Cabrera Bello is ranked first in Strokes Gained: Putting.

Cabrera Bello is making his fifth start in the WGC-Mexico Championship (T38/2017, T11/2016, T63/2013, 65<sup>th</sup>/2012). In 16 previous rounds at this event, he'd posted just two rounds in the 60s (69/R2/2017, 67/R3/2016) before 66-67-69 this week. In 13 previous WGC appearances, Cabrera Bello owns two top-five results. He finished T5 at the WGC-HSBC Champions earlier this season, however, his best result was third at the 2016 WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play when he defeated Rory McIlroy 3 and 2 in the Consolation Match at Austin CC.

In six PGA TOUR starts this season, Cabrera Bello has finished inside the top-30 in each start. Cabrera Bello holds three European Tour titles, his most recent at the 2017 Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open. He seeks his first PGA TOUR win in his 57<sup>th</sup> career start.

### **Justin Thomas**

Justin Thomas, starting the third round off the 10th tee in T38 position, posted a course-record 9-under 62 to move to solo 10th and four strokes back heading into the final round. His round included eight birdies, one bogey and an eagle 2 at the first hole (his 10th) when his tee shot finished 26 feet, 7 inches from the hole.

His 62 eclipsed the previous course record set by Jordan Spieth in the third round of the 2017 WGC-Mexico Championship, where Spieth went bogey free with six birdies and an eagle at the first hole to shoot 63. In 2014, in a PGA TOUR Latinoamérica event (8 Abierto Mexicano de Golf), Californian Chris Gillman posted a first-round 63 (par 72) but preferred lies were used that week.

It also ties the 18-hole tournament record shared by Retief Goosen (2002), Bubba Watson (2012), Sergio Garcia (2002) and J.B. Holmes (2015).

The current FedExCup standings leader, Thomas' two wins on the 2017-18 PGA TOUR Season include the CJ CUP @ NINE BRIDGES and last week's The Honda Classic to go along with one other top-10 finish (T9/Genesis Open).

Thomas was the 54-hole leader at Club de Golf Chapultepec a year ago before a final-round 72 left him with a T5 result.

**Miscellaneous Notes**

Ross Fisher aced the par-3 third hole from 157 yards with a 9-iron for his first career hole-in-one on the PGA TOUR. It marks the 11<sup>th</sup> ace in tournament history and first since a year ago, when Justin Thomas aced the par-3 13<sup>th</sup> hole on Saturday at Club de Golf Chapultepec.

Pat Perez shot a 3-under 68 to slide into a tie for sixth, three back of Sharma's lead. After turning in 32 with four birdies and a bogey, Perez made a move with birdies on Nos. 11, 12 and 14 to briefly tie for the lead, but followed it up with a bogey on the 16<sup>th</sup> and a double bogey on the par-3 17<sup>th</sup>. Fresh off a career season that saw the 42-year-old advance to the TOUR Championship for the first time, Perez captured the 2017 CIMB Classic for his third career PGA TOUR victory and is in current good standing to return to East Lake at No. 8 in the FedExCup standings.

Defending champion and world No. 1 Dustin Johnson shot 3-under 68 to sit T6 with one round to go. The American made an eagle on No. 6 when his second shot from 232 yards landed 7 feet, 2 inches from the hole, and capped off his round with a birdie from 21 feet, 7 inches on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Johnson overcame a two-stroke deficit to win the 2017 WGC-Mexico Championship thanks to a final-round 68 and has four total top-10 finishes in WGC-Mexico Championship tournament history – 2<sup>nd</sup>/2011, T4/2014, 1<sup>st</sup>/2015, 1<sup>st</sup>/2017. He leads the PGA TOUR Scoring Average this season with 68.891, ahead of Alex Noren (69.058).

Brian Harman sits T6 after a third-round 68. The 31-year-old left-hander made birdies on Nos. 5, 9, 15 and 17 against one dropped shot at 16. The two-time PGA TOUR winner is making his third WGC appearance and has one top-10 finish to his credit (8/2017 HSBC Champions). He is making his WGC-Mexico Championship debut this week.

Xander Schauffele overcame a double-bogey on the par-4 fifth hole and a front-nine 1-over 36 with three birdies over a four-hole stretch on the back nine at Nos. 12, 13 and 15 to sit in a tie for sixth at 10-under. The 2016-17 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year is competing in his second career World Golf Championships event (T46/2017 HSBC Champions) this week and currently leads the field in scrambling.

Mexico's Abraham Ancer shot an even-par 72 in the third round to sit T55. Ancer secured his exemption into the WGC-Mexico Championship by finishing as the top-ranked Mexican player in the world (No. 255) as of February 19, 2018.

There are four past champions of the WGC-Mexico Championship in the field this week:

<b>Player (year won)</b>	<b>R3 Standing</b>
Phil Mickelson (2009)	T2
Dustin Johnson (2017, 2015)	T6
Patrick Reed (2014)	T42
Justin Rose (2012)	T50

**Bogey-free rounds:**

R1: Louis Oosthuizen (64), Xander Schauffele (65), Shubhankar Sharma (65), Rafa Cabrera Bello (66).

R2: Xander Schauffele (68), Sergio Garcia (65), Brendan Steele (66), Bubba Watson (66), Kyle Stanley (65), Charley Hoffman (66), Jordan Spieth (67), Tyrell Hatton (68), Marc Leishman (68).

R3: Tyrrell Hatton (64), Phil Mickelson (65), Adam Hadwin (67).

**Scoring Average**

	Front 9	Back 9	Total	Cumulative
R1	35.203	35.547	70.750	-

R2	34.938	35.172	70.109	-
R3	34.438	35.844	70.281	70.380

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