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### **2018 Zurich Classic of New Orleans pre-tournament notes**

**Dates:** April 23-29, 2018

**Where:** Avondale, La.

**Course:** TPC Louisiana (Pete Dye/2004), 36-36—par 72/7,425 yards

**Field size:** 80 teams/160 players

**2017 winning team:** Cameron Smith/Jonas Blixt

**Purse:** \$7,200,000 (\$1,036,800 to each team member)

**FedExCup:** 400 points (to each team member)

**Format:** Four-ball (Thursday/Saturday) and Foursomes (Friday/Sunday)

**Twitter:** @zurich\_classic

### **Tournament Format**

- A two-player team event, with each team comprised of two professionals, featuring Four-ball (best ball) during the first and third rounds and Foursomes (alternate shot) during the second and fourth rounds.
- The starting field will consist of 80 teams (160 players). Eligible players are those in priority order under Section III-A of Tournament Regulations, except that the following shall not be eligible: Open Qualifying, Top 10 from Previous Tournament, The Current PGA National Professional Champion and the Local PGA Section exemption are only eligible if they both commit and play as a team.
- Following the conclusion of the second round, there will be a cut to the low 35 teams and ties at the 35th position. In case of a tie after 72 holes, there will be a sudden-death playoff using the Foursomes format for the first extra hole, Four-ball for the second extra hole and the alternating formats, thereafter, on a set rotation of holes.
- The Zurich Classic of New Orleans awards FedExCup points and official money and will count as an official victory for the members of the winning team. As such, both players will receive a two-year winner's exemption and an eligibility into Invitational fields, including the Sentry Tournament of Champions and THE PLAYERS Championship. FedExCup points and prize money will be awarded to teams making the cut based on combining every two positions from the distribution table for a standard TOUR event, with each team member receiving an equal share. For example, the winning team will evenly split first and second place FedExCup points (500 for first and 300 for second for 800 total points, or 400 for each player). Official prize money will be distributed in the same manner.

### **History of PGA TOUR team events**

- The 2017 Zurich Classic of New Orleans was the first official PGA TOUR team event in 36 years, since the 1981 Walt Disney World National Team Championship held at the Magnolia, Palm and Lake Buena Vista courses at Disney, won by Vance Heafner and Mike Holland. That tournament went to individual stroke-play event in 1982.
- The Zurich Classic of New Orleans uses a Four-ball and Foursomes format. The closest the PGA TOUR had previously come to using a Foursomes format in an official event was at the 1934 Pinehurst Pro-Pro held at Pinehurst's No. 2 and won by Tommy Armour and Bobby Cruickshank. That tournament played under Scotch Foursomes rules, a setup that allows each player to hit a drive on each hole and then whichever player's ball is in the best position, the teammate hits the next shot in alternate-shot fashion until the ball is holed.

### **First PGA TOUR event to feature walk-up music**

The Zurich Classic of New Orleans will be the first PGA TOUR event to feature walk-up music. Each two-player team will select their walk-up song to be played on the first tee at TPC Louisiana as they are introduced for the final two rounds of play on Saturday, April 28 and Sunday, April 29.

## Tuesday Celebrity Shoot-out

The Celebrity Shootout takes place Tuesday at 3 p.m. The competition, over four holes (Nos. 1, 2, 8 and 9), using the same Foursomes/Four-ball format as the Zurich Classic, will determine the winner. A \$40,000 charitable donation will be made. A total of eight celebrities are scheduled to compete, including Chris Berman, Sean Payton, Roger Clemens and Reggie Bush.

## Wednesday Pro-Am

The Wednesday Pro-Am will see each team of two professionals play with three amateurs. The professionals will use a modified alternate-shot format, where both players will tee off on each hole and select a drive, after which they will play alternate shot to complete the hole.

## 2017 Final-Round Leaderboard (Four-Ball format)

Jonas Blixt/Cameron Smith	67-62-68-64—261 (-27)*
Kevin Kisner/Scott Brown	70-64-67-60—261 (-27)
Kelly Kraft/Kevin Tway	71-63-70-61—265 (-23)
Jordan Spieth/Ryan Palmer	66-66-70-64—266 (-22)

\*won sudden-death playoff with birdie on fourth extra hole

## How Cameron Smith/Jonas Blixt won the 2017 Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Just before darkness fell on Sunday evening of the final round, Scott Brown watched as partner Kevin Kisner drained a 94'6" chip for eagle on the final hole to force a playoff with the team of Jonas Blixt and Cameron Smith. The sudden-death playoff began on No. 18 at 8 a.m. CT Monday utilizing the Four-ball format. Following three holes halved with pars (18-18-9), Smith sealed the victory with a birdie at the fourth playoff hole when he pitched to tap-in range on the par-5 18th hole. Kisner and Brown were unable to hole birdie putts from within 15 feet to extend the playoff. Smith and Blixt entered the playoff having played bogey-free golf through 72 holes, including Sunday's 8-under 64. They remained bogey-free over the four playoff holes.

## More on Cameron Smith

- Was his first PGA TOUR win in his 53<sup>rd</sup> start at age 23
- Win earned him a spot in the field at THE PLAYERS (MC)
- Finished 46<sup>th</sup> in the 2016-17 FedExCup after advancing through the first three FedExCup Playoffs events
- Is currently 25<sup>th</sup> in the FedExCup standings highlighted by back-to-back T5s at the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play and the Masters, two of five top-10 finishes this season

## More on Jonas Blixt

- Was his third PGA TOUR win in his 133<sup>rd</sup> start at age 33
- Is one of nine players from Sweden to win on the PGA TOUR
- Finished 82<sup>nd</sup> in the 2016-17 FedExCup after advancing through the first two FedExCup Playoffs events
- Struggling with injury, took a four-week break during February/March
- Is currently 107 in the FedExCup standings; A T14 at the RBC Heritage is his best result on TOUR since winning in New Orleans

## The Zurich Classic and the FedExCup

The 2017-18 season marks the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the FedExCup, the season-long points competition highlighted by four FedExCup Playoffs events, with the FedExCup champion being crowned at the completion of the TOUR Championship.

- 17 of the top 30 in the current FedExCup standings are in the field led by Justin Thomas (No. 1)
- Six FedExCup champions are in the field: Justin Thomas (2017), Jordan Spieth (2015), Billy Horschel (2014), Henrik Stenson (2013), Brandt Snedeker (2012) and Jim Furyk (2010)
- Since 2007, six of the 12 winners of the Zurich Classic of New Orleans have gone on to qualify for the season finale, the TOUR Championship: Andres Romero (2008), Jerry Kelly (2009), Bubba Watson (2011), Jason Dufner (2012), Billy Horschel (2013) and Justin Rose (2015)

## Field Highlights

- 10 of the top-15 in the Official World Golf Ranking: Justin Thomas (2), Jordan Spieth (3), Jon Rahm (4), Justin Rose (5), Brooks Koepka (9), Sergio Garcia (10), Patrick Reed (11), Tommy Fleetwood (12), Jason Day (13) and Henrik Stenson (14)
- 22 major champions, combining for 30 major titles. Winners of multiple majors: Padraig Harrington (3), Jordan Spieth (3), John Daly (2), Retief Goosen (2), Zach Johnson (2) and Bubba Watson (2)
- 13 of this season's PGA TOUR winners: Brendan Steele, Pat Perez, Justin Thomas, Ryan Armour, Patrick Cantlay, Jon Rahm, Jason Day, Gary Woodland, Bubba Watson, Brice Garnett, Ian Poulter, Patrick Reed and Andrew Landry

- 11 past Zurich Classic of New Orleans winners: Cameron Smith/Jonas Blixt (2017), Brian Stuard (2016), Justin Rose (2015), Billy Horschel (2013), Jason Dufner (2012), Bubba Watson (2011), Jerry Kelly (2009), Andres Romero (2008), Nick Watney (2007) and K.J. Choi (2002)
- There have been eight international winners of the Zurich Classic since 2000 (2017/Cameron Smith/Australia-Jonas Blixt/Sweden, 2015/Justin Rose/England, 2014/Seung-Yul Noh/South Korea, 2008/Andres Romero/Argentina, 2004/Vijay Singh/Fiji, 2002/K.J. Choi/South Korea, 2000/Carlos Franco/Paraguay)
- Six Zurich Ambassadors: Jason Day, Justin Rose, Sergio Garcia, Tommy Fleetwood, Jamie Donaldson and Billy Horschel
- For the first time since the 2017 TOUR Championship, all four current major championship winners will compete in the same PGA TOUR event: Patrick Reed (2018 Masters Tournament), Justin Thomas (2017 PGA Championship), Jordan Spieth (2017 The Open) and Brooks Koepka (2017 U.S. Open)

### **Team Highlights**

- Patrick Reed/Patrick Cantlay is the only team with two players ranked inside the top-15 in the FedExCup
- Patrick Reed/Patrick Cantlay is the only team with two winners this season
- Three teams feature a pair of major winners: Justin Rose/Henrik Stenson, Jim Furyk/David Duval and Louis Oosthuizen/Charl Schwartzel
- Justin Rose/Henrik Stenson is the only team with Olympic medal winners
- Justin Rose/Henrik Stenson is the highest-ranked team in the OWGR
- Jim Furyk/David Duval has the most PGA TOUR wins of any team (Furyk 17 + Duval 13 = 30)
- Jim Furyk/David Duval is the only team with two players who have sub-60 scores on TOUR
- Steve Stricker/Jerry Kelly are Nos. 1 and 2 in the Charles Schwab Cup on PGA TOUR Champions
- Bubba Watson/Matt Kuchar are among an elite group who have advanced to the FedExCup Playoffs for 11 consecutive seasons since the FedExCup was introduced in 2007

### **Notable Teams**

#### **Justin Rose/Henrik Stenson**

- Missed the cut in their team debut in 2017
- Won three times as partners in the 2014 Ryder Cup
- Rose's season: One win (2017 WGC-HSBC Champions) and three additional top-10s in seven starts
- Stenson's season: Four top-10s in five starts, including a T2 to Rose's win at HSBC Champions
- Rose has five top-10 finishes in the FedExCup
- Stenson won the FedExCup in 2013 and was runner-up to Jordan Spieth in 2015

#### **Sergio Garcia/Rafa Cabrera Bello**

- First time teaming up in the Zurich Classic of New Orleans; Garcia is making his first start since 2010 while this is Cabrera Bello's tournament debut
- Teammates at 2016 Ryder Cup; Cabrera Bello was the only European without a loss at Hazeltine
- Both have wins on the European Tour (Garcia/14, Cabrera Bello/3)
- Cabrera Bello finished T8 at the 2017 ISPS HANDA World Cup with teammate Jon Rahm
- Garcia's season: Three top-10s in six starts; missed cuts in last two starts (Masters, Valero Texas Open)
- Cabrera Bello's season: Three top-10s in 10 starts, highlighted by a T3 at the WGC-Mexico Championship

#### **Justin Thomas/Bud Cauley**

- The University of Alabama alums team up for the second year in a row; Finished T5 in 2017
- Thomas is making his third start in the tournament, while Cauley has three previous starts
- Thomas' season: The reigning FedExCup champion and current leader has two wins (THE CJ CUP @ NINE BRIDGES and The Honda Classic) and three additional top-10s in 10 starts
- Cauley's season: Two top-10s (both in the fall) in 13 starts
- Thomas has 8 PGA TOUR wins while Cauley is in search of his first
- Thomas will turn 25 on Sunday

#### **Jordan Spieth/Ryan Palmer**

- The Texas duo will team up for the second year in a row; In 2017, the team shared the lead after a first-round 66 before finishing fourth.
- Spieth is making his third start in the tournament, while Palmer has nine previous starts
- Spieth has 11 TOUR wins; Palmer has three
- Spieth's season: Four top-10s in 10 starts including third-place showings in his last two starts: Houston Open, Masters Tournament
- Palmer's season: Best result in nine starts is a playoff loss at the Farmers Insurance Open

### **David Duval/Jim Furyk**

- The veteran duo has combined for 30 PGA TOUR wins
- Furyk, with 17 PGA TOUR wins, has the most wins of any player in field; Duval has the second-most with 13
- Duval reached the No. 1 position in the Official World Golf Ranking, while Furyk's highest position was No. 2 (following 2007 THE NORTHERN TRUST)
- Since 2015, Duval has made 13 starts on TOUR and made two cuts (both in 2015)
- Furyk's season: Four made cuts in six starts, with one top-10 (Valspar Championship/7)
- Both players are among the exclusive group of eight players who have shot sub-60 rounds on TOUR, Furyk the only player to achieve the feat twice.

### **Patrick Reed/Patrick Cantlay**

- Finished T14 in their team debut in 2017
- Reed's season: One win (Masters) and three additional top-10s in 13 starts; this is his first start since winning his first major
- Cantlay's season: Maiden PGA TOUR win (Shriners Hospitals for Children Open) and two additional top-10s in 10 starts
- Reed won two high school state championships while attending University High in Baton Rouge

### **Jon Rahm/Wesley Bryan**

- The duo will play together for the first time; Bryan finished T29 in 2017 with partner Ryan Blaum
- Rahm's season: One win (CareerBuilder Challenge); Finished fourth at the Masters
- Bryan's season: Best result in 12 starts is a T27 at the Sentry Tournament of Champions

### **Steve Stricker/Jerry Kelly**

- The pair of PGA TOUR Champions winners (and Wisconsin natives) will team up for the second year
- The team is No. 1 and 2 in the Charles Schwab Cup (Stricker/1; Kelly/2)
- This is the 12<sup>th</sup> time they have teamed up in various events; most recently they finished T5 at last week's Bass Pro Shops Legends of Golf at Big Cedar Lodge on PGA TOUR Champions
- At age 51, they are the oldest in the field this week, with a combined 33 appearances in the event
- Stricker owns 12 PGA TOUR titles, with his best result this season a T12 at the Valspar Championship
- Kelly is a three-time PGA TOUR winner, including the 2009 Zurich Classic of New Orleans

### **Bubba Watson/Matt Kuchar**

- Will make their team debut; Watson finished T5 in 2017 with partner J.B. Holmes
- Both are 39 and both went to school in Georgia (Watson/University of Georgia, Kuchar/Georgia Tech)
- Both have represented the United States at the Presidents Cup, Ryder Cup and the Olympics, and both have multiple TOUR wins, including the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play
- Watson won the Zurich Classic in 2011. The two-time Masters champion, and 11-time PGA TOUR winner is seeking his third win of the season (Genesis Open, WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play)
- Kuchar, a seven-time TOUR winner, owns 97 top-10s in 414 starts

### **Tommy Fleetwood/Chris Paisley**

- The English duo will make their first tournament appearance
- Fleetwood, who is a first-year member on the PGA TOUR, will make his 30<sup>th</sup> PGA TOUR start; his best result is a runner-up at the 2017 WGC-Mexico Championship, one of five top-10s on TOUR
- Paisley has two previous PGA TOUR starts, both this season: 2018 WGC-Mexico Championship (T37) and last week's Valero Texas Open (MC)
- Both have won on the European Tour: Fleetwood (4) and Paisley (1)

### **Jason Day/Ryan Ruffels**

- The Aussies will make their team debut; Day paired with Rickie Fowler in 2017 to miss the cut, while Ruffels finished T29 with Kyle Stanley
- In 2016, Day finished T5 at the Zurich Classic as the first player ranked No. 1 in the Official World Golf Ranking to compete in the event since David Duval in 1999.
- Day's season: One win (Farmers Insurance Open) and one runner-up (AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am) in seven starts
- Ruffels, who celebrates his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday of the Zurich Classic, is fluent in both Spanish and English. He was born in the United States, but moved to Australia after his dad, tennis professional Ray Ruffels, received a job offer there. His notable amateur career in Australia included becoming the youngest person to make the cut in a PGA Tour of Australasia event, achieved at the 2013 Queensland Open.

- Ruffels made his first professional PGA TOUR start at the 2016 Farmers Insurance Open where he finished T43. He's made nine cuts in 16 starts on the PGA TOUR with a T20 at the 2016 Zurich Classic of New Orleans his best result. On PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, Ruffels owns three runner-up results in 20 starts.

#### **Kevin Kisner/Scott Brown**

- Will team again after their playoff loss in 2017
- Both play out of Palmetto Golf Club in Aiken, South Carolina
- Kisner seeks his third PGA TOUR title (2017 Fort Worth Invitational, 2015 The RSM Classic) while Brown searches for his second victory (2013 Puerto Rico Open)

#### **Brooks Koepka/Marc Turnesa**

- Reigning U.S. Open champion Brooks Koepka is set to return to the PGA TOUR after a four-month absence due to a partially torn tendon in his wrist
- In the 2017 Zurich Classic, Koepka finished T5 with his younger brother, Chase, as his teammate, shooting a final-round 62
- Koepka will make his 90<sup>th</sup> start on the PGA TOUR
- Turnesa has one win on TOUR (2008 Shriners Hospitals for Children Open); Has one start on TOUR this season: Corales Puntacana Resort & Club Championship (MC)

#### **Jason Dufner/Pat Perez**

- The multiple PGA TOUR winners, both in their 40s, will team up for the first time; Dufner finished T5 in 2017 with partner Patton Kizzire
- Perez is making his first start in New Orleans since 2012

#### **Graeme McDowell/Ian Poulter**

- The European duo will team up for the first time; Poulter finished T32 in 2017 with partner Geoff Ogilvy
- They were paired together once in the 2008 Ryder Cup, defeating Kenny Perry and Jim Furyk in the second-day Four-ball match at Valhalla
- McDowell's season: One top-10 in 12 starts
- Poulter's season: One win (Houston Open) and two additional top-10s in 10 starts

#### **Brice Garnett/Chesson Hadley**

- Will pair together for the first time
- Both won their first PGA TOUR events in the Caribbean: Hadley (2014 Puerto Rico Open) and Garnett (2018 Corales Puntacana Resort & Club Championship)
- Both are multiple Web.com Tour winners; they finished No. 1 (Hadley/\$562,475) and No. 2 (Garnett/\$395,212) on the 2017 Web.com Tour money list
- Were the only PGA TOUR rookies to qualify for the FedExCup Playoffs in 2014

#### **Several international teams are made up of players from the same country, including;**

- **Australia:** Jason Day/Ryan Ruffels and Greg Chalmers/Cameron Percy
- **Argentina:** Fabian Gomez/Andres Romero
- **Canada:** Mackenzie Hughes/Corey Connors
- **China:** Xinjun Zhang/Zecheng Dou
- **England:** Tommy Fleetwood/Chris Paisley
- **Ireland:** Shane Lowry/Padraig Harrington
- **Mexico:** Abraham Ancer/Roberto Diaz
- **Scotland:** Russell Knox/Martin Laird
- **South Africa:** Louis Oosthuizen/Charl Schwartzel and Tyrone Van Aswegen/Retief Goosen
- **South Korea:** K.J. Choi/Charlie Wi
- **Spain:** Sergio Garcia/Rafa Cabrera Bello

#### **Among those in the field with Louisiana connections:**

- **Patrick Reed** – Won two high school state championships while attending University High in Baton Rouge.
- **Smylie Kaufman** – LSU graduate won in his second career start on TOUR at the 2015 Shriners Hospitals for Children Open with a final-round 61. Father Jeff and mother Pam both played collegiately at LSU. Shot 68-81 at 2016 Zurich Classic and teamed with Harold Varner III to miss cut last year. Partner in 2018 is Tom Lovelady.
- **Sam Burns** – Louisiana native chose to turn professional in August 2017, forgoing his final two years at LSU. The 21-year-old became the first Tiger in school history to earn NCAA Division I Jack Nicklaus National Player of the Year honors after a 2017 in which he was named SEC Player of the Year and set

the school record for single-season scoring (70.05). The two-time All-American won four titles while at LSU. Burns earned status on the Web.com Tour after medaling at his Second Stage site and finishing T10 at the 2017 Qualifying Tournament. Burns has competed in 10 PGA TOUR events, with his best finish as a professional coming in 2018 at The Honda Classic, where he was paired with Tiger Woods in the final round (T8). As an amateur, he finished T6 at the 2017 Barbasol Championship. Burns' teammate is TOUR winner William McGirt.

- **John Peterson** – Three-time All-America and two-time All-SEC selection at LSU, where he won twice, including the 2011 NCAA Division I individual championship. His mother, Jan, is a graduate of LSU and two of his siblings also attended LSU. Moved back home to Fort Worth, Texas, in 2014 after living in Baton Rouge, La., following college. T8 in 2012 is best result in five appearances at Zurich Classic. Joins TOUR winner Cody Gribble as teammate at Zurich Classic.

#### **Tournament notes**

- The Zurich Classic of New Orleans is the penultimate PGA TOUR event for players, not previously eligible, to earn a start in THE PLAYERS in one of three ways: 1) moving into the top 50 in the Official World Golf Ranking; 2) winning the Zurich Classic of New Orleans; and 3) moving into the top 10 in the 2017-18 FedExCup standings.
- Since 1990, 17 players have made the Zurich Classic of New Orleans their maiden victory on the PGA TOUR, including nine in the last 13 years; Cameron Smith (2017), Brian Stuard (2016), Seung-Yul Noh (2014), Billy Horschel (2013), Jason Dufner (2012), Andres Romero (2008), Nick Watney (2007), Chris Couch (2006) and Tim Petrovic (2005).
- International players won three out of the last four years at the Zurich Classic (Seung-Yul Noh/2014, Justin Rose/2015, Jonas Blixt/Cameron Smith/2017).
- TPC Louisiana is the fifth of 11 TPC Network venues to host PGA TOUR events this season.
- The low round of the 2017 Zurich Classic was 12-under 60 (both Four-ball) by the South African team of Retief Goosen/Tyrone Van Aswegen in round two and Kevin Kisner/Scott Brown in the final round.