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2019 Desert Classic Tournament Notes

Dates: January 14-20, 2019

Where: La Quinta, California

Courses: Stadium Course at PGA WEST; Par/Yards: 72/7,113 (Host)

Nicklaus Tournament Course at PGA WEST; Par/Yards: 72/7,159

La Quinta Country Club; Par/Yards: 72/7,060

Field: 156

2018 champion: Jon Rahm

Purse: \$5,900,000 (\$1,062,000/winner)

FedExCup: 500 (winner)

Format: 72-hole stroke play (Rounds 1-3 are Pro-Am format)

Five Things to Know about the 2019 Desert Classic

- 1. Rose in the Desert:** Reigning FedExCup champion Justin Rose will make his first PGA TOUR start of the 2019 calendar and first at the Desert Classic since 2010; Rose has qualified for the season-ending TOUR Championship nine times in 12 years since the inception of the FedExCup in 2007.
- 2. Rahm looking to repeat:** Jon Rahm is seeking to join Johnny Miller (1975-76) as back-to-back winners of the Desert Classic.
- 3. 60th playing:** The 2019 Desert Classic marks the 60th playing of the Palm Springs-PGA TOUR stop which was first won by Arnold Palmer in 1960. Palmer would win his final of 62 TOUR titles, and fifth Desert Classic crown, in 1973; the Desert Classic is one of four tournaments played on multiple courses, along with the Farmers Insurance Open, AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and The RSM Classic.
- 4. Duval's 59:** The 2019 Desert Classic is the 20th anniversary of David Duval's 12-under 59 which occurred on January 24, 1999 during the fifth and final round of the Desert Classic. He posted one eagle, 11 birdies and six pars on the Palmer Course at PGA WEST.
- 5. PGA TOUR LIVE:** PGA TOUR LIVE, available as part of the NBC Sports Gold Package, 2018-19 debuts at the Desert Classic.

The Desert Classic and the FedExCup

- Four of the last five winners of the Desert Classic qualified for TOUR Championship that year: Jon Rahm (2018), Jason Dufner (2016), Bill Haas (2015), Patrick Reed (2014). Hudson Swafford, 2017 Desert Classic winner, finished 38th in the final FedExCup standings.
- Twelve of the top 30 in the current FedExCup standings are in the field including Charles Howell III (fifth) and Sony Open in Hawaii runner-up Andrew Putnam (10th).

Past Champions

The field includes 11 past champions of the Desert Classic: Phil Mickelson (2002, 2004), Mike Weir (2003), Charley Hoffman (2007), Pat Perez (2009), Bill Haas (2010, 2015), Jhonattan Vegas (2011), Mark Wilson (2012), Brian Gay (2013), Jason Dufner (2016), Hudson Swafford (2017) and Jon Rahm (2018)

How the Desert Classic was won in 2018

Spain's Jon Rahm closed with a bogey-free, 5-under 67 at PGA WEST's Stadium Course and waited to watch Andrew Landry birdie the 72nd hole to force a sudden-death playoff. After matching pars over the first three holes, Rahm holed a five-foot birdie putt to win his second PGA TOUR title in his 38th career start at the age of 23 years, 2 months, 11 days.

More on Jon Rahm

- With the win, Rahm became the second-youngest winner of the Desert Classic. Jack Nicklaus was 23 years, 13 days when he claimed the title in 1963.
- With his win in the Coachella Valley, Rahm passed Jordan Spieth and moved to No. 2 in the Official World Golf Ranking.
- Following his win at the Desert Classic, Rahm claimed three additional top-five finishes (4th/Masters, T5/Charles Schwab Challenge, T4/PGA Championship). He ended the season 23rd in the FedExCup standings and eighth in the Official World Golf Ranking.
- Rahm will be making his third start of the 2018-19 PGA TOUR Season this week and comes off a T8 finish in his most recent start at the Sentry Tournament of Champions.
- In November, Rahm won the Hero World Challenge for his sixth worldwide victory.
- With a win this week, Rahm would join Johnny Miller as the only back-to-back winner of the event (1975-76).

A closer look at the field

Justin Rose

- 2017-18 FedExCup champion will make his fifth start in the Desert Classic and first since 2010 (MC).
- Claimed two top-10 finishes in four previous Desert Classic starts; 3rd/2007, T10/2006
- Has one top-10 in one start this season, a third-place showing in his title defense at the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions
- Claimed multiple titles in 2017-18 for just the second time in his career, bringing his career total wins on the PGA TOUR to nine. Posted a career-high 11 top-10s in 2017-18
- With his T4 finish at the 2018 TOUR Championship, claimed the FedExCup title by 41 points over No. 2 Tiger Woods

Phil Mickelson

- World Golf Hall of Fame member is a two-time winner of the Desert Classic (2002 and 2004)
- Won his 43rd career PGA TOUR title in 2017-18 at the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship
- In his only other start this season, finished T17 at the Safeway Open

Aaron Wise

- Named 2017-18 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year
- Won maiden TOUR title at the 2018 AT&T Byron Nelson
- Only TOUR rookie to advance to last season's TOUR Championship (T15)
- Ended 2017-18 season 24th in FedExCup standings
- Has one top-10 in three starts on TOUR this season (Mayakoba Golf Classic/T10)
- Making third start in the Desert Classic (T17/2018, T34/2017)
- Played one season on PGA TOUR Canada-Mackenzie Tour (2016) and one on Web.com Tour (2017)

Andrew Landry

- The 2018 Desert Classic runner-up notched his maiden PGA TOUR title at the 2018 Valero Texas Open
- Making third start in the Desert Classic (2nd/2018, MC/2016)

Pat Perez

- Claimed first of three PGA TOUR titles at the 2009 Desert Classic (2016 Mayakoba Golf Classic, 2017 CIMB Classic)
- Making his 14th start in the Desert Classic
- Has two top-10s in five starts this season: T7/THE CJ CUP @ NINE BRIDGES, T6/Mayakoba Golf Classic

Charlie Reiter

- The Palm Desert graduate will make his second start on the PGA TOUR as a sponsor's invite
- Missed the cut at the 2018 Desert Classic while in his senior year of high school
- Currently a freshman at USC

Charity

Since its inception, the Desert Classic has been unwavering in its commitment to charity on a variety of levels. To date, the tournament's host organization, Desert Classic Charities, has provided more than \$60 million to the Eisenhower Medical Center and other non-profit organizations in the region.

The PGA TOUR and its tournaments generated a record \$190 million for more than 3,000 charitable causes in 2018, bringing the all-time total to \$2.84 billion, which includes donations made by tournaments on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions, Web.com Tour, Mackenzie Tour-PGA TOUR Canada, PGA TOUR Latinoamérica and PGA TOUR Series-China. The TOUR surpassed \$1 billion in 2005 and \$2 billion at the beginning of 2014.

Significant changes for PGA TOUR in 2018-19

1. The new schedule – with an improved flow, from start-to-finish, will allow fans to better follow and engage in the PGA TOUR all season long. THE PLAYERS move to March and the PGA Championship move to May has created a “Season of Championships” -- with six straight months of significant events starting with THE PLAYERS, bookended by the FedExCup Playoffs in August.
2. The FedExCup Playoffs – which have been reduced from four to three events beginning this season and will conclude before Labor Day, allowing the TOUR to compete to own the August sports calendar – will feature fields of 125 for THE NORTHERN TRUST, 70 for the BMW Championship and 30 for the TOUR Championship, where the FedExCup Champion will be determined.
3. A simplified, strokes-based scoring system at the TOUR Championship that crowns a singular champion. Instead of a points reset at the TOUR Championship, the TOUR is instituting a strokes-based system related to the FedExCup standings through the BMW Championship. The scoring system virtually replicates the win probabilities of the current system but uses strokes instead of points – which is much easier for golf fans, and the casual sports fan, to understand. The leader through the first two FedExCup Playoffs events will begin the TOUR Championship at 10-under par. The next four players will start at -8 through -5, respectively. The next five will begin at -4, regressing by one stroke per five players until players 26-30 start at even par. With the implementation of this change, the player with the lowest total score including FedExCup Starting Strokes will be the FedExCup champion and be credited with an official victory in the TOUR Championship. Two constants will the drama and the crowning of a deserving champion seen over the first 12 years of the FedExCup. Using next year's scoring at the 2018 TOUR Championship, Justin Rose – thanks to a birdie on the 72nd hole -- would have captured the FedExCup by a single shot over Tiger Woods, Billy Horschel and Dustin Johnson.
4. A \$10 million Wyndham Rewards-sponsored bonus – the Wyndham Rewards Top 10 -- where players will be rewarded for their outstanding play during the Regular Season, prior to the start of the FedExCup Playoffs. The top Regular Season finisher in FedExCup points through the Wyndham Championship will earn \$2 million, followed by \$1.5 million for the runner-up with the 10th-place finisher earning \$500,000. Dustin Johnson led last year's FedExCup standings through the Wyndham Championship, just 83 points ahead of Justin Thomas.
5. Including the Wyndham Rewards Top 10, there will be a doubling of FedExCup total bonus money available to players, from \$35 million to \$70 million.