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## **Young players thrive in opening events of 2015-16 PGA TOUR season**

*PGA TOUR season set to resume in January at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions*

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii – Just seven events into the 2015-16 PGA TOUR season, it is clear the new faces on the PGA TOUR are ready to win. Six of the seven tournament titles were captured by first-time winners, including three players who are under the age of 24. These young winners will be joining an elite field of winners from the 2015 calendar year on the PGA TOUR, including Masters and U.S. Open champion Jordan Spieth, Open Championship winner Zach Johnson, PGA Championship winner Jason Day and winner of THE PLAYERS, Rickie Fowler. The winners-only Hyundai Tournament of Champions returns to The Plantation Course at Kapalua from Jan. 6-10, 2016.

### **Frys.com Open**

Emiliano Grillo kicked off the 2015-16 season in style, winning in his first start on the PGA TOUR at the Frys.com Open to make his Road to Kapalua a short one. The Argentinian won the Web.com Tour Championship at Dye's Valley at TPC Sawgrass in the start before to earn his playing privileges on TOUR, making the Frys.com Open triumph his second consecutive professional win. He became the first player since Russell Henley at the 2013 Sony Open in Hawaii to win in his first start as an official PGA TOUR member. Grillo, 23, continues a trend of young winners on TOUR, as the 2014-15 season saw the most winners in their 20s in any season since 1970 with 24.

### **Shriners Hospitals for Children Open**

Twenty-three-year-old Smylie Kaufman closed with a blistering 61 to earn his first victory in his rookie season on the Road to Kapalua at the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open. The tournament has a history of first-time winners and winners in their 20s, as Kaufman's win made him the 10th player since 2000 to post his first-career victory at the event. The tournament also boasts 10 winners in their 20s in the last 20 years, the second-most of any event in that timeframe (BMW Championship – 11).

### **CIMB Classic**

Justin Thomas became the third consecutive under-24 PGA TOUR winner when he claimed the CIMB Classic at Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club in Malaysia on the Road to Kapalua. The 22 year old had a solid rookie season on the PGA TOUR, recording seven top 10s on his way to a No. 32 finish in the FedExCup. He didn't have to wait long into his sophomore campaign to claim victory, as his CIMB Classic win came in just the third event of the season. His second-round 61 set a new course record and matched the tournament record. He entered the final round tied with Brendan Steele and edged Adam Scott by a single stroke after a final-round 66 that included a birdie-birdie-birdie-par finish.

“Honestly, I'm extremely excited about going to Maui before Sony,” Thomas said following his win. “I think that's going to be awesome. Being a small field and the few guys that are there, I think that's really going to be a lot of fun, and I've heard a lot of great things about it.”

### **World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions**

Entering the final round of the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions, Russell Knox held a share of the lead with Kevin Kisner at 16-under-par. The 30-year-old Scotsman carded a 4-under 68 on Sunday and posted 20-under 268, good for a two-stroke win over Kisner to earn his first trip to the Hyundai Tournament of Champions. Aside from Jeff Maggert, who won the very first World Golf Championships at the 1999 Dell Match Play, Russell Knox is the only player to make a World Golf Championships event his first PGA TOUR victory.

### **Sanderson Farms Championship**

When Peter Malnati won the Sanderson Farms Championship on the Road to Kapalua, he was the fifth consecutive first-time winner, the first time the PGA TOUR produced five straight first-time winners since 2002. The 28-year-old made 497 feet, 7 inches of putts for the week (the PGA TOUR record for most feet of putts made in an event belongs to Ben Martin, who sank 551 feet, 2 inches of putts at the 2015 Colonial National Invitation Tournament). He was also the fifth consecutive former Web.com Tour player to win on the PGA TOUR.

### **OHL Classic at Mayakoba**

Graeme McDowell's Road to Kapalua had seen ups and downs since his win at the 2013 RBC Heritage, but the 36-year-old Northern Irishman won his third PGA TOUR title at this fall's OHL Classic at Mayakoba in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. He has one career start at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions, a third-place effort in 2011 following his win at the 2010 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. McDowell began the final round of the OHL Classic at Mayakoba three shots off the lead, but he closed with a 66 to win in a Monday finish. He is now 2-0 in PGA TOUR playoffs, winning his second title at the 2013 RBC Heritage in a playoff over Webb Simpson.

### **The RSM Classic**

After several tantalizingly close calls, Georgia's Kevin Kisner finally found himself a winner on the PGA TOUR at The RSM Classic on the Road to Kapalua. Entering the event, Kisner had recorded four runner-up finishes in his previous 19 starts, including three playoff losses in 2015 (The Greenbrier Classic, THE PLAYERS Championship, RBC Heritage). With the win, Kisner qualified for his first Hyundai Tournament of Champions and also became the 11th former Georgia Bulldog to win on the PGA TOUR.

A full list of qualifiers can be found here - <http://www.pgatour.com/tournaments/hyundai-tournament-of-champions/qualifiers.html>

A variety of ticket packages are now on sale, including good-any-one-day tickets, daily tickets and weekly tickets. Clubhouse packages are also still available, both in weekly and daily tickets. The Hyundai Tournament of Champions returns to The Plantation Course in Maui, Hawaii from Jan. 6 -10, 2016. Tickets are available at [PGATOUR.com/Hyundai](http://PGATOUR.com/Hyundai) or via Ticketmaster. Fans are reminded that each year, youth 18 and younger are admitted free of charge to the tournament when accompanied by a ticketed adult.

The Hyundai Tournament of Champions Official Pro-Am is taking place from Jan. 5-6, and is the only Pro-Am on the PGA TOUR that guarantees participants will be paired with a tournament winner. In addition to the rare opportunity to play with PGA TOUR stars, participants will also play both courses at one of the most famous stops on TOUR. For more information, please contact Nancy Cross at (808) 665-9160 or [nancycross@pgatourhq.com](mailto:nancycross@pgatourhq.com).

All four competitive rounds will be broadcast on Golf Channel. Follow the tournament on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/HyundaiTOC](http://www.facebook.com/HyundaiTOC) or Twitter @HyundaiTOC to get updates and a behind-the-scenes look at the tournament preparations.

### **About Hyundai Motor America**

Hyundai Motor America, headquartered in Fountain Valley, Calif., is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Co. of Korea. Hyundai vehicles are distributed throughout the United States by Hyundai Motor America and are sold and serviced through more than 830 dealerships nationwide. All Hyundai vehicles sold in the U.S. are covered by the Hyundai Assurance program, which includes the 5-year/60,000-mile fully transferable new vehicle limited warranty, Hyundai's 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain limited warranty and five years of complimentary Roadside Assistance. Hyundai Blue Link Connected Care provides owners of Hyundai models equipped with the Blue Link telematics system with proactive safety and car care services complimentary for one year with enrollment. These services include Automatic Collision Notification, Enhanced Roadside Assistance, Vehicle Diagnostic Alert, Monthly Vehicle Health Report and in-vehicle service scheduling. Please visit our media website at [www.hyundainews.com](http://www.hyundainews.com).

### **About PGA TOUR**

The PGA TOUR is the world's premier membership organization for touring professional golfers, co-sanctioning more than 130 tournaments on the PGA TOUR, Champions Tour, Web.com Tour, PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, PGA TOUR Canada and PGA TOUR China.

The PGA TOUR's mission is to entertain and inspire its fans, deliver substantial value to its partners, create outlets for volunteers to give back, generate significant charitable and economic impact in the communities in which it plays, and provide financial opportunities for TOUR players.

Worldwide, PGA TOUR tournaments are broadcast to more than 1 billion households in 225 countries and territories in 32 languages. Virtually all tournaments are organized as non-profit organizations in order to maximize charitable giving. In 2014, tournaments across all Tours generated a record \$140.5 million for local and national charitable organizations. At the 2014 Farmers Insurance Open, the PGA TOUR announced the all-time charitable contributions had surpassed \$2 billion.

The PGA TOUR's web site is [PGATOUR.COM](http://PGATOUR.COM), the No. 1 site in golf, and the organization is headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.