



Media Information
BMW Championship
5th September 2017

Festival of golf in Chicago: The top 70 players on the PGA TOUR tee-off at the BMW Championship.

- **The list of competitors seeking victory at Conway Farms reads like a roll call of the game's great and the good.**
- **All four of the current major champions will be playing.**
- **Defending champion and World No. 1 Dustin Johnson (USA) considered a slight favourite.**

Munich/Chicago. Once again the cream of world golf has risen to the top in the quest to qualify for the BMW Championship at Conway Farms Golf Club on the outskirts of Chicago from September 14-17. As the third and penultimate tournament in the FedExCup Playoffs, the BMW Championship is one of the most important and prestigious events on the PGA TOUR. It carries a prize fund of \$8.75 million, with \$1.575 million going to the winner

The championship field is made up of the leading 70 players in the season-long standings, from which the top 30 will go through to the Tour Championship in Atlanta (Sept 21-24) and the chance to scoop a \$10 million bonus as the overall winner of the FedExCup.

The list of competitors seeking victory at Conway Farms reads like a roll call of the game's great and the good. Among those leading the way is young American Justin Thomas, who won his first major at the PGA Championship last month and set a record for the playoffs on Sunday when he had eight threes in a round of 64 at the Dell Technologies Championship. He went on to win the tournament – his fifth title this season.

Picking a winner from the field that will assemble for the BMW Championship is almost impossible although Dustin Johnson, the world No.1, can probably be considered a slight favourite by dint of the prodigious distances he hits the ball off the tee. The 33-year-old American is the defending champion and one of only two players (the other is Tiger Woods) to have won the title twice.



After his victory at Crooked Stick Golf Club (Indianapolis) last year, Johnson, the winner of the US Open three months' earlier, said his game was in fine fettle. "I've got confidence in every part of my game," he said. "This week the putter worked really well and my performance was fantastic. It is a big event, a playoff event, and I played four really solid rounds."

There is every chance that Johnson will be repeating those very words on Sunday week, but not if England's Paul Casey has a say in the matter. Casey had a virtual head-to-head battle with Johnson at Crooked Stick last year before eventually settling for second place. Once again, he is in fine form heading into the BMW Championship, is comfortably inside the top ten in the FedExCup standings, and confident of going one better than last year.

The thousands of fans who will turn up to witness a festival of golf will be spoilt for choice. All four of the current major champions – Sergio García (ESP, Masters), Brooks Koepka (USA, U.S. Open), Jordan Spieth (USA, The Open) and Thomas (PGA Championship) – are playing, as are former champions Jason Day (AUS), Rory McIlroy (NIR), Zach Johnson (USA) and Justin Rose (ENG).

For Day, it will be a welcome return to the scene one of his finest victories. The Australian won the BMW Championship at Conway Farms in 2015 – after opening with mega-low rounds of 61 and 63 and going on to win by an emphatic margin of five strokes – and became world No.1 in the process.

By his own exalted standards, McIlroy has had a disappointing, no-win season. The former world No.1 has been hampered by a rib injury and has not been able to play as freely as he would have liked. Such is his ability and competitive spirit, however, that it would be foolish to dismiss the chances of the four-time major champion.

"Beware the injured golfer" is one of golf's mantras. McIlroy could certainly prove a case in point. There is much to savour.

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