

FAMILIAR FACES PLUS NEW NAMES AND EVENTS TO HIGHLIGHT 2016 VALSPAR CHAMPIONSHIP PRESENTED BY BB&T

Jordan Spieth, the 22-year-old golf superstar who cemented his status as the top-ranked player in the world last weekend with an eight-shot victory at the Hyundai Tournament of Champions, will return to defend his title at the Valspar Championship presented by BB&T this March. The Valspar Championship was the first of five PGA TOUR events, including the Masters and U.S. Open, Nwon by Spieth on his way to becoming an overwhelming choice as the 2015 PGA TOUR Player of the Year.

Spieth participated in a 30-minute conference call on Tuesday. Here are some highlights:

On the importance of his win last year at the Valspar Championship:

“It was huge. It was the first time I had ever made a putt to win a professional tournament. Having to perform on the last couple holes and in a playoff was something that I hadn’t done before. Having to make those two par saves and then that putt in the playoff, it gave me a huge amount of confidence that what happened late in 2014 was something we could continue into 2015. And to get your second PGA TOUR win was very nice, especially after it had been almost two years space since the first. It led to an incredible run – and it all started on the 17th green with that playoff putt.”

On the Copperhead Course:

“It is a tremendous challenge. In the course of a season, there aren’t many courses that present the challenge the Copperhead course does... The layout is so challenging in itself. It’s fair, but you have to hit the ball both directions, you have to control the ball in swirling winds and then you have to control your speed on the greens, they get sneaky quick. I really enjoy it because it is such a challenge, but a fair challenge.”

On what successfully defending his title would mean.

“It would be spectacular. I think it’s a challenge. I haven’t had that many opportunities, most of my wins came last year. I have had that chance (a few times) before though. The thing that’s toughest about it is getting over where you were the previous year, and just forgetting about it. I am excited about the opportunity at the Copperhead Course. I think the tougher courses play in my favor and I thoroughly enjoy playing there with great memories going back to 2013. It would be tremendous to get my title defenses off to a good start for the upcoming season.”



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Spieth defeated Patrick Reed, currently another member of the Official World Golf Ranking top 10, and 2008 Valspar Championship winner Sean O'Hair in a dramatic three-hole playoff. His winning putt at the 17th hole was recently picked #6 on a list of the Top 10 Shots on the PGA TOUR in 2015.

Spieth will face another strong field in his title defense. In addition to the return of many of the outstanding group of players who have regularly competed on the Copperhead Course, the names of Graeme McDowell, Hunter Mahan and Chris Kirk are on the current commitments list.

McDowell, who counts the 2010 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach among his three PGA TOUR victories, will be playing in the Valspar Championship for the first time.

Mahan, a six-time PGA TOUR winner since 2007 and two-time Ryder Cup participant, and Kirk, who has won three times in the last two years, will be returning after absences. Mahan last played the Copperhead in 2008, while Kirk made his only appearance in 2011.

"There still is a long way to go until we have our final field," says Tournament Director Tracy West, "but it should look a lot like last year when only six of the PGA TOUR's regular events could claim a stronger strength of field."

In addition to the 72-hole PGA TOUR competition, Valspar Championship Week will again be highlighted by a number of fan-friendly, non-golf events.

For the second year, Valspar LIVE! will feature one of the top acts in country music free of charge to that day's patrons. On Thursday, March 10, Rascal Flatts, the best-selling country vocal group of the past decade with 15 No.1 singles, will perform on the Osprey Driving range after the conclusion of play.

New to the Valspar Championship in 2016, is a kickoff event, the Par4Miler on Sunday, March 6 at 4 p.m. This timed run (with walkers welcome) across the Copperhead Course also includes a post-race party, a ticket to the tournament good for later in the week, a gallon of Valspar paint and a participant t-shirt.

"We also will have an expanded Jabil Family Fun Zone presented by Publix, and a great lineup of venues for food and drink including the return of the Hooters Owl's Nest to the 12th green," says West. "The refurbished Copperhead Course is getting rave reviews and everything is in place for a great Valspar Championship Week."



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