



Tim Cronin / Illinois Golfer

FOCUS OF ACTIVITY The 18th hole of Cog Hill No. 4 in BMW Championship livery after Rees Jones' renovation. The family picnic was smaller in September.

hil Kosin coined the nickname, one of the many creative thoughts he had in his too-short time here.

It was a warm July day at the Western Open at Cog Hill, and Kosin was, as was his wont, ruminating while persuing news large and small for *Chicagoland Golf*. A large gallery was on hand at Cog, which was typical, and while the precise date of his pronuncement was not recorded, the hunch is that many of them on that day were following one Tiger Woods.

"This is the family picnic," Kosin said. "Ev-

erybody shows up."

He was right. Everybody did show up. Corporate types trying to not look out of place in a jacket and tie for their half-day in a suite. Hockey guys like Cliff Koroll and Bill Gardner, who gravitated naturally to golf giving the timing of their off season and would find a tree to hang out under near the 17th green. Regulars who would tee it up on No. 2 or No. 3 each Saturday morning, and couldn't resist seeing how the pros would play Joe Jemsek's big course. Irregulars – golf is thick with them – claiming they remem-

bered when Billy Casper birdied this hole or that at Medinah and then threw him the ball.

Everybody. Including wanna-bes like Jerry "the Crasher" Berliant, a lawyer convicted for tax evasion in Operation Greylord and then disbarred. He fancied himself a sports fan and celebrity schmoozer of the first order, if he could enter sans ticket – say, by wearing a CBS Sports shirt when that network was the outlet.

Jerry was the kind of guy Bob Arum would recognize during a news conference touting a fight, or that a Pinkerton would spot without a ticket by the 17th green at Augusta National. Both moments, we witnessed.

And Jemsek himself, of course. Pork-pie hat, dark blue blazer, white shirt, striped tie. The very picture of the executive he pretended not to be, greeting one and all with a handshake and a well-worn one-liner while counting the house.

The family picnic was great fun, four exciting days of competitive golf preceded by three days of warmup, including Monday's qualifying round at Village Links – sometimes the most nerve-tingling golf of all, as pretenders and future contenders teed it up in pursuit of one of four spots in the 156-man Western Open field. Make it, and you had a shot at making it big. Miss out, and it's back to the pro shop for another year or to the highway for places unknown.

John Daly made it through the four-spotter once before he was John Daly, then missed the cut. Brian Fogt, a mini-tour specialist, made it through another year and tied for eighth.

The Western at Cog had a different aura to it than the same tournament at Butler National Golf Club, the all-male preserve in Oak Brook. At Butler, the swells hobnobbing was the thing. Regular punters were welcome, but had to take their lunch on the cavernous pavilion tent, where the air conditioning was spotty. And if it rained, well, carp fished from Salt Creek might be on the menu the next day. Almost.

At Cog, the great unwashed were catered to. Certainly, the expense-check crowd had its hideaways, but the rest of us has superior viewing points on Pork Chop Hill - with said delicacy available a few steps away behind the 12th tee – and more shady spots along the sides of Dubsdread's verdant fairways. Some Sundays, more than 50,000 people showed up, far more

than the best days at Butler National.

This was a happy surprise to Western Golf Association brass who would never have moved from challenging Butler National – a course designed to host the Western – if not for the Shoal Creek imbroglio of 1990. That meant an end to all-male clubs hosting tournaments on the American tour. Providentially, Jemsek offered Cog Hill, and the public thronged to the site.

But something was lost with the renaming of the Western Open into the BMW and the change in the date to September. Fewer people made the trek to Cog from the north suburbs. Football other pursuits were now in the way compared to the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.

The change of venue came about mostly at BMW's request, though it didn't hurt the carmaker's cause that Steve Stricker and Phil Mickelson – the latter having a mad-on against Rees Jones since Jones redid Torrey Pines to Mickelson's disliking – gave the renovation of Dubsdread, designed to attract a U.S. Open, bad reviews. So the WGA left Cog Hill, and, never mind the many charity outings the complex hosts, no outside tournament of significance has been held on the course since.

This week, Conway Farms, on the edge of Lake Forest and a target for BMW's needs, is the venue. Expect good crowds, low scores, and a fat check for the Evans Scholars Foundation.

September's regular issue, featuring on-thescene coverage of the BMW Championship, the Western Amateur, the Illinois Open, the Illinois PGA and a special report on Doug Ghim's excellent U.S. Amateur adventure, plus the return of our Travel department, will be out shortly after the conclusion of the BMW.

IN THIS ISSUE

A SPECIAL EDITION SPOTLIGHTING THE BMW CHAMPIONSHIP

NEWS

REVVED UP AT CONWAY FARMS

OPINION

GRILL ROOM:

REMEMBERING 'THE FAMILY PICNIC'

DEPARTMENTS

THE FORM CHART	7
WESTERN OPEN /BMW CHAMPIONSHIP	
RECORDS	8
CONWAY FARMS COURSE MAP	
and Fan Facts	9
BMW CHAMPIONSHIP TEE TIMES	
AND TELEVISION SCHEDULE	10

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

TIM CRONIN

2

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BMW CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW Revved up at Conway TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM CRONIN REPORTING FROM LAKE FOREST funny thing has happened on the way to East Lake Golf Club, site of the season-ending Tour Championship, where the \$10 million pot o' gold put up by Federal Express will be awarded to the PGA Tour's champion golfer for the 2016-17 season.

Some of the leading players admit that the winning the BMW Championship – this week's garden party at Conway Farms Golf Club, with \$1.575 million going to the champion – just isn't all that big a deal in the grand scheme of things.

Chick Evans will be spinning in his grave when he finds that ye olde Western Open, which he won in 1910, which used to be a major championship and which benefits the scholarship operation he conceived and carries his name, has sunk in the eyes of some to that of a mere stepping-stone to the next stop for the gravy train.

That attitude isn't necessarily because of the \$10 million grand prize at the finish, though that does overshadow this week's first prize the way a total eclipse overwhelms a mere partial eclipse with the wow factor. It's because of the structure of the PGA Tour's elimination system.

Players like Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas have realized that, if they're among the top players going into the BMW, they'll still be among the top five players going into next week, where they'd pick up the jackpot if they win the Tour Championship. (For everyone else, there is too much math involved.)

Spieth, first in the point standings and second in the money, put it this way: "If you're in a very good position going in and you feel like you're playing well, the first three can seem like a little more difficult because you see the light at the end of the tunnel. You know that East Lake is really what matters.

"You're playing at a PGA Tour event

FedEx Cup Playoff Standings

September 4, 2017

1	Jordan Spieth	3	5,071	16 Adam Hadwin	1	1,568
2	Justin Thomas	5	5,044	17 Justin Rose	0	1,534
3	Dustin Johnson	4	4,650	18 Matt Kuchar	0	1,531
4	Hideki Matsuyama	3	3,021	19 Kyle Stanley	1	1,467
5	Jon Rahm	1	2,894	20 Kevin Chappell	1	1,446
6	Rickie Fowler	1	2,217	21 Webb Simpson	0	1,422
7	Marc Leishman	1	2,084	22 Patrick Reed	0	1,415
8	Paul Casey	0	2,065	23 Russell Henley	1	1,314
9	Brooks Koepka	1	1,952	24 Louis Oosthuizen	0	1,304
10	Pat Perez	1	1,894	25 Jason Dufner	1	1,302
11	Daniel Berger	1	1,735	26 Henrik Stenson	1	1,275
12	Charley Hoffman	0	1,729	27 Brendan Steele	1	1,247
13	Jhonattan Vegas	1	1,688	28 Jason Day	0	1,241
14	Kevin Kisner	1	1,660	29 Gary Woodland	0	1,236
15	Brian Harman	1	1,572	30 Bill Haas	0	1,236

while focused on the next one, which is different than the rest of the season where you're focused on that event where you're at. There's just such a bigger prize at the end."

In other words, unless Spieth falls on his face walking out the door of the Conway Farms locker room, he's already in the place he needs to be next week.

Spieth did, at least, say he had "no trouble finding motivation this week because of the way these guys have been playing and how close we are."

Which is true. Thomas is 27 points behind, and defending BMW champion Dustin

Johnson is 421 back, which can be made up with a victory by the big hitter and poor finishes by Spieth and Thomas. But they will all march on to Atlanta no matter what.

That makes the fight in the middle of the pack for those final spots in next week's field more noteworthy, if not more important, than the scrap to see who lifts the J.K. Wadley Trophy late on Sunday afternoon. Will Jason Day, Gary Woodland and Jay Haas, who occupy 28th through 30th at the moment, hang on to their places, or will they be supplanted by someone from 31st and below? Mackenzie Hughes, Xander Schauffele and Hudson

Swafford, the next three on the list would love to make that happen. And farther down, all the way to Anirban Lahiri, the 70th man, who needs a high finish to get to 30th in the standings.

But the focus will likely be for the title. Thomas, whose victory in Boston was the fifth of the 2016-17 season, ranks as a favorite, as does Johnson, whose return to form was evident by his win in the playoff opener in New York, and Spieth. His win at Royal Birkdale proved he's back on track – some were considering it an off year even though he'd won at Pebble Beach and Hartford.

Then there's Hideki Matsuyama, who triumphed at Firestone to go with two earlier wins and likely is the best player of the moment to have not won a major.

At this point of the season, it's motivation more than mechanics that matters. All the top

players are in form. Most all have their minds straight – an exception might be Jason Day, who was on top of the world two years ago when he won the PGA and the BMW and was No. 1 on the planet. This week, he'll have a new caddie, having launched Colin Swatton in favor of chum Luke Reardon. His resume includes working as a roofer and caddying for a buddy of Day's in mini-tour play. Swatton, who has worked with Day since he was 12, will still be his coach.

"Nothing between what he did on the golf course that obviously forced this," Day said. "Was always thorough and on top of everything. Unfortunately, sometimes the chemistry doesn't work.

"He said, 'You can yell at me if you want,' that's how good of a guy he is. I said, 'No, I can't damage the relationship that we've had together.'

"Unfortunately, sometimes I get in my own way."

In other words, don't put money on Day this week.

Thomas, whose victory in the PGA Championship last month vaulted him into the forefront of the player of the year race, may be a good selection. Having weathered the storm that was Hurricane Irma – his Jupiter, Fla., house was all but unscathed by the storm, though he took the precaution of taking some valuables, including the Wanamaker Trophy, to Rickie Fowler's house to store in his oversize safe, just in case – he seems completely at ease. And he's scoped out Conway Farms.

"It's short so you can have a lot of birdie looks and a lot of birdie chances if you're driving it well and just like to see how low you can go," Thomas said.

At Conway, that means 59.





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OFF-COURSE ATTRACTIONS The younger set has an autograph area (left) all their own — Matt Kuchar obliged the kids on Tuesday, while TopGolf brought a portable version of their party-on range to Conway Farms, where adults can spank a Spalding for a shot at a major award.



THE FINISH LINE The 18th green at Conway Farms, end of the trail leading to the Tour Championship, will see someone made \$1.575 million richer on Sunday.

BMW CHAMPIONSHIP FORM CHART

Player	Odds	2017 \$	Best	2016 BMW	2015 BMW	2014 BMW	The Skinny
Dustin Johnson	6-1	\$8,510,193	4 wins	Winner	T 7	DNP	Improved short game for the bomber
Jordan Spieth	7-1	\$8,870,845	3 wins	Т 9	T13	T 8	Best putter since Ben Crenshaw
Justin Thomas	10-1	\$8,953,022	5 wins	T32	T13	DNP	If he starts fast, try and catch him
Hideki Matsuyama	15-1	\$8,210,907	3 wins	T24	T 7	T20	Blossomed into contender this year
Paul Casey	18-1	\$3,511,724	3rd Safeway	2	T23	DNP	He's done everything but win
Rory McIlroy	22-1	\$2,410,844	4th 3 times	T42	T 4	T 8	Due to get back into form
Jon Rahm	25-1	\$5,510,748	Won San Dieg	o DNP	DNP	DNP	Up and down year for mercurial lad

WESTERN OPEN / BMW CHAMPIONSHIP RECORDS

Most victories

5	Walter Hagen	1961-21-26-27-32
5	Eldrick "Tiger" Woods	1997-2000-03-07-09
	Willie Anderson	1902-04-08-09
4	Billy Casper	1965-66-69-73
3	MacDonald Smith	1912-25-33
3	Jim Barnes	1914-17-19
3	Ralph Guldahl	1936-37-38
3	Tom Watson	1974-77-84

Wire-to-wire victories / no ties

12 players, most recently:

Jason Day 2015 Conway Farms GC Camilo Villegas 2008 Bellerive CC Eldrick "Tiger" Woods 2003 Cog Hill No. 4

Largest margin of victory

10 Mike Brady 1922 Oakland Hills
Largest deficit overcome to win after 3 rounds
7 Tom Kite 1986 (won 4-man playoff)

Lowest 72-hole score

262 (-22) Eldrick "Tiger" Woods 2007 Cog Hill No. 4 262 (-22) Jason Day 2015 Conway Farms GC

Lowest single-round score

59 (-12) Jim Furyk 2013, R2 Conway Farms GC 61 (-10) Matt Kuchar 2013, R3 Conway Farms GC 2015, R1 Conway Farms GC

Lowest 9-hole score

28 (-7) Jim Furyk 2008, R2 Bellerive CC front 28 (-8) Jim Furyk 2013, R2 Conway Farms back

Low 72-hole score in relation to par

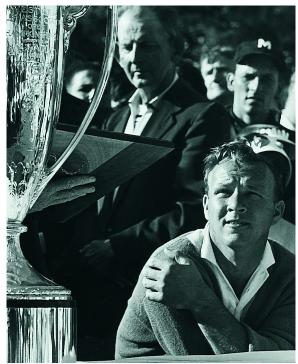
23-under (265) Dustin Johnson 2016 Crooked Stick 22-under (262) Eldrick "Tiger" Woods 2007 Cog Hill No. 4 22-under (262) Jason Day 2015 Conway Farms

Most starts Most consecutive starts

26 Doug Ford
25 Tom Watson
25 Scott Verplank

Most top 5 finishes
10 Walter Hagen
9 Jock Hutchison
9 Sam Snead
26 Doug Ford
22 D.A. Weibring
21 Scott Simpson

Most top 10 finishes
14 Sam Snead
13 Jock Hutchison
13 Walter Hagen
13 Walter Hagen



Illinois Golfer Archive

THE KING Arnold Palmer gazes at the Western Open's J.K. Wadley Trophy after winning in 1961.

Youngest champions (Yr/Mo/Day)

		. 3	
20/ 1/1	5 a-Chicl	k Evans	1910
21/ 0/2	26 a-Scott	t Verplank	1985
21/6/	7 Eldrick	"Tiger" Woods	1997
22/ 2/	5 John J	. McDermott	1913

Oldest champions

46/	5/15	Stan Leonard	1960
45/	7/14	Scott Hoch	2001
43/	5/9	MacDonald Smith	1933

Lowest field averages

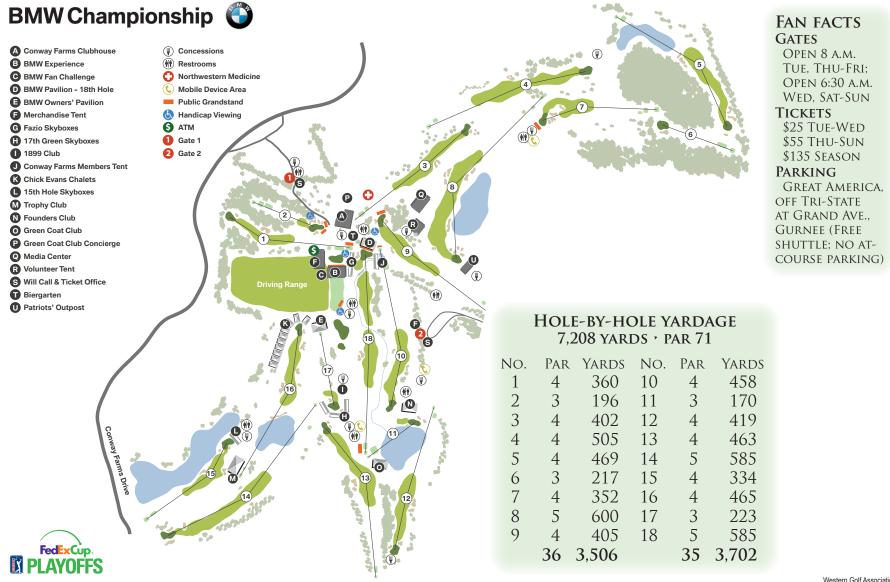
69.370 (par 70) Bellerive CC 2008 69.489 (par 71) Conway Farms GC 2015

CHAMPIONS

SINCE 1934 *WON PLAYOFF

1934	Harry Cooper*	1977	Tom Watson
1935	Johnny Revolta	1978	Andy Bean*
1936	Ralph Guldahl	1979	Larry Nelson*
1937	Ralph Guldahl*	1980	Scott Simpson
1938	Ralph Guldahl	1981	Ed Fiori
1939	Byron Nelson	1982	Tom Weiskopf
1940	Jimmy Demaret*	1983	Mark McCumber
1941	Ed "Porky" Oliver	1984	Tom Watson*
1942	Herman Barron	1985	a-Scott Verplank*
1946	Ben Hogan	1986	Tom Kite*
1947	Johnny Palmer	1987	D.A. Weiskopf
1948	Ben Hogan	1988	Jim Benepe
1949	Sam Snead	1989	Mark McCumber*
1950	Sam Snead	1990	Wayne Levi
1951	Marty Furgol	1991	Russ Cochran
1952	Lloyd Mangrum	1992	Ben Crenshaw
1953	E.J. "Dutch" Harrison	1993	Nick Price
1954	Lloyd Mangrum	1994	Nick Price
1955	Cary Middlecoff	1995	Billy Mayfair
1956	Mike Fetchick*	1996	Steve Stricker
1957	Doug Ford*	1997	Tiger Woods
1958	Doug Sanders	1998	Joe Durant
1959	Mike Souchak	1999	Tiger Woods
1960	Stan Leonard*	2000	Robert Allenby*
1961	Arnold Palmer	2001	Scott Hoch
1962	Jacky Cupit	2002	Jerry Kelly
1963	Arnold Palmer*	2003	Tiger Woods
1964	Chi Chi Rodriguez	2004	Stephen Ames
1965	Billy Casper	2005	Jim Furyk
1966	Billy Casper	2006	Trevor Immelman
1967	Jack Nicklaus	2007	Tiger Woods
1968	Jack Nicklaus	2008	Camilo Villegas
1969	Billy Casper	2009	Tiger Woods
1970	Hugh Royer	2010	Dustin Johnson
1971	Bruce Crampton	2011	Justin Rose
1972	Jim Jamieson	2012	Rory McIlroy
1973	Billy Casper	2013	Zach Johnson
1974	Tom Watson	2014	Billy Horschel
1975	Hale Irwin	2015	Jason Day
1976	Al Geiberger	2016	Dustin Johnson

CONWAY FARMS GOLF CLUB



THURSDAY-FRIDAY GROUPINGS

Thursday, Sept. 17 / Friday, Sept. 18 No. 1 Tee

9 a.m. / 11:17 a.m. – Sung Kang, Coppell, Tex.; Lucas Glover, Jupiter, Fla.; Zach Johnson, Cedar Rapids, Ia.

9:11 a.m. / 11:28 a.m. – Chez Reavie, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Ian Poulter, Woburn, England; Keegan Bradley, Woodstock, Vt.

9:22 a.m. / 11:39 a.m. – Charl Schwartzel, Johannesburg, S.Afr.; Bryson DeChambeau, Clovis, Calif.; Si Woo Kim, Seoul, S. Korea

9:33 a.m. / 11:55 a.m. – Sergio Garcia, Castellon, Spain; Charles Howell III, Windermere, Fla.; Phil Mickelson, Rancho Santa Fe., Calif.

9:44 a.m. / 12:06 p.m. – Jason Dufner, Auburn, Ala.; Henrik Stenson, Gothenburg, Sweden; Brendan Steele, Idyllwild, Calif.

9:55 a.m. / 12:17 p.m. – Patrick Reed, Houston, Tex.; Russell Henley, Kiawah Island, S.C.; Louis Oosthuizen, Albertina, S. Afr.

10:06 a.m. / 12:28 p.m. – Jhonattan Vegas, Maturin, Venezuela; Kevin Kisner, Aiken, S.C.; Brian Harman, St. Simons Island, Ga.

10:22 a.m. / 12:39 p.m. – Marc Leishman, Melbourne, Aust.; Paul Casey, Surrey, England; Brooks Koepka, West Palm Beach, Fla. 10:33 a.m. / 12:50 p.m. – Jordan Spieth, Dal-

las, Tex.; Justin Thomas, Louisville, Ky.; Dustin Johnson, Jupiter, Fla.

10:44 a.m. / 1:01 p.m. – Luke List, Long Beach, Calif.; Cameron Smith, Brisbane, Aust.; Stewart

Cink, Duluth, Ga.

10:55 a.m. / 1:12 p.m. – Scott Brown, Aiken, S.C.; Emiliano Grillo, Argentina; Grayson Murray, Raleigh, N.C.

11:06 a.m. / 1:23 p.m. – Ryan Moore, Las Vegas, Nev.; Bud Cauley, Jacksonville Beach, Fla. 11:17 a.m. / 9 a.m. – Martin Laird, Glasgow, Scot-

land; Ollie Schneiderjans, Alpharetta, Ga.; Rory McIlroy, Holywood, N. Ireland

11:28 a.m. / 9:11 a.m. – Kevin Na, Las Vegas, Nev.; Patrick Cantlay, Long Beach, Calif.; Francesco Molinari, Turin, Italy

11:39 a.m. / 9:22 a.m. – Wesley Bryan, Augusta, Ga.; Billy Horschel, Ponte Vedra Beach., Fla.; Tony Finau, Lehi, Utah

11:55 a.m. / 9:33 a.m. – Mackenzie Hughes, Dundas, Ontario; Xander Schauffele, San Diego, Calif.; Hudson Swafford, Sea Island, Ga. 12:06 p.m. / 9:44 a.m. – Jason Day, Brisbane,

Aust.; Gary Woodland, Topeka, Kan.; Bill Haas, Greenville, S.C.

12:17 p.m. / 9:55 a.m. – Kyle Stanley, Gig Harbor, Wash.; Kevin Chappell, Fresno, Calif.; Webb Simpson, Charlotte, N.C.

12:28 p.m. / 10:06 a.m. – Adam Hadwin, Abbotsford, B.C.; Justin Rose, London; Matt Kuchar, Sea Island, Ga.

12:39 p.m. / 10:22 a.m. – Pat Perez, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Daniel Berger, Jupiter, Fla.; Charley Hoffman, Rancho Santa Fe., Calif.

12:50 p.m. / 10:33 a.m. – Hideki Matsuyama,

Sendai, Japan; Jon Rahm, Barrika, Spain; Rickie Fowler, Murrieta, Calif.

1:01 p.m. / 10:44 a.m. – Jamie Lovemark, San Diego, Calif.; Robert Streb, Shawnee, Kan.; Rafa Caberea Bello, Gran Canaria, Spain 1:12 p.m. / 10:55 a.m. – James Hahn, Alameda, Calif.; Sean O' Hair, Chadds Ford., Pa.; Kevin Tway, Edmond, Okla.

1:23 p.m. / 11:06 a.m. – Danny Lee, Rotorua, N.Z.; Anirban Lahiri, Bangalore, India



TELEVISION COVERAGE

Wednesday Golf: 4-5 p.m.
Thursday Golf: 2-6 p.m.
Friday Golf: 2-6 p.m.

Saturday Golf: noon-2 p.m. NBC: 2-5 p.m. Sunday Golf: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. NBC: 1-5 p.m.

All times Central.

