



2016 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am Recap

While huge galleries lined the sun-drenched fairways going gaga over pop music superstar Justin Timberlake, journeyman tour pro Vaughn Taylor went unnoticed during the first three rounds. The debut of the Jordan Spieth bobble-head doll drew far more attention than Taylor.

Then, on Sunday, after absorbing a pair of bogeys on the front nine at Pebble Beach Golf Links, the almost-40-year-old from Augusta went from invisible to invincible. Taylor emerged from the background with four straight birdies on the closing nine to overtake Phil Mickelson and barely hold on for a one-stroke victory when Mickelson's five-foot birdie putt rimmed out on the final hole.

"I was just very fortunate for him to not make that putt for birdie there," said Taylor, whose final-round 65 gave him a total of 270, 17-under-par, for his first tour win in 11 years. "You can't ever count him out."

Taylor, less than a month from his 40th birthday, was not counting on doing too much at Pebble Beach, since the strong field included six of the Top 10 players in the world, not to mention Mickelson and two-time champ Brant Snedeker. Taylor was ranked 447th in the world and was lucky to get into the tournament as an alternate, having no status on the PGA TOUR. His victory changed all that.

"Yeah, it's hard to believe," Taylor said of beating a field of world-ranked players – No. 7 Justin Rose and No. 9 Patrick Reed finishing tied for sixth, No. 19 Brooks Koepka eighth, plus No. 3 Jason Day, No. 25 Jimmy Walker and top-ranked Spieth all in the Top 25. "I can't believe it actually happened."

Staying out of the spotlight for three rounds, Taylor opened with 70 at Pebble Beach and was tied for 39th after the first round. He followed that with a solid 4-under-par 68 at Spyglass Hill, moving up to T13, and then sneaked up to T8 Saturday with a 67 at Monterey Peninsula Country Club's Shore Course, far away from the crowds and celebrities – and Mickelson – playing the third round at Pebble Beach.

Taylor began the final round six shots behind Mickelson, the 54-hole leader who was going for his fifth AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am win, hoping to tie Mark O'Meara for most individual victories. And with two previous pro-am team titles, Mickelson would become the winningest player in tournament history.

However, Mickelson – saying he "played a little bit tighter throughout the round" – made two early bogeys at No.4 and No.5, and then lost the lead with a bogey on the 11th. Another bogey on the 14th dropped him two shots behind, where he stayed until a birdie on the 17th put him back in position to tie and force a playoff.

"I hit it left edge and it was rolling there," Mickelson said of the birdie putt on 18. "It didn't quite take the break."

The tournament got the biggest break: warm and sunny weather despite it being an El Nino year. That and having the hottest entertainer in the world – "JT" – attracted 195,000 fans for the week, a record high for attendance. That in turn helped the host Monterey Peninsula Foundation raise a record high of \$10.3 million for area charities.

There were records on the course, too, as Sung Kang lit up the scoreboard Friday with his 60, 11-under-par, at Monterey Peninsula Club's Shore Course. Kang, from South Korea, opened with a 31 on the back nine, followed by a 29 on the front, to break the old mark of 61 by Charlie Wi in the first round of 2012.

The celebrity amateur field welcomed several newcomers, including actor Mark Wahlburg (playing with pal Bubba Watson), Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred, pro football star Larry Fitzgerald and baseball all-star Josh Donaldson. Also new this year, 32 celebrities "warmed up" in a \$1 Million Hole-In-One For Charity contest Wednesday on the 7th hole at Pebble Beach. Nobody made a million-dollar ace, but country singer Joe Don Rooney earned \$50,000 for being closest to the hole in the finals.



Taylor and amateur partner Gregg Ontiveros, the CEO of Group O with a 15 handicap, also captured the pro-am team competition. They finished with a total of 257, 30-under-par, to win by one stroke.

The annual Jack Lemmon Award went to FedEx global executive Donald Colleran, the amateur who helped his team the most. Colleran, a 14-handicap from Memphis, helped 30 strokes for the week, playing with pro Peter Malnati.

LEADERS: First Round – Chez Reavie -8 (63 MP), Freddie Jacobson -7 (65 PB), Cameron Smith -7 (64 MP), Bronson Burgoon -7 (64 MP), seven players tied at -6. Second Round – Sung Kang -11 (132/60 MP), Hiroshi Iwata -11 (66/132 PB), Phil Mickelson -10 (133/65 MP), Freddie Jacobson -10 (134/69 SH), Chez Reavie -10 (133/70 PB), Justin Rose -9 (134/68 MP). Third Round – Phil Mickelson -16 (199/66 PB), Hiroshi Iwata -14 (201/69 SH), Freddie Jacobson -13 (202/68 MP), Sung Kang -13 (202/70 PB), Roberto Castro -12 (203/67 MP), Jonas Blixt -12 (203/67 SH), Chez Reavie -11 (204/71 SH).

CUT: 69 pros made the cut at 214, 1 under par, to advance to Sunday's final round. The pro-am team cut was 198, 17-under par, with the limit of 25 teams advancing (three teams eliminated through the tiebreaker).

COURSE AVERAGES: Pebble Beach 72.654; Spyglass Hill 72.506; Monterey Peninsula 70.699.

WEATHER: Monday through Wednesday sunny, temperatures reaching into the 80s. Thursday sunny, high of 75, wind 5-10 mph. Friday mostly sunny, high of 64, wind 7-12 mph. Saturday fog delayed start of play 30 minutes, followed by mostly sunny, high of 63, wind 10-15. Sunday mostly sunny, high of 69, wind 10-15 mph.