

# Open up for grabs as stars fade out

AN 11-year-old golf course shaped from Wisconsin pastureland was sure to bring something different to the US Open.

This might have been more than anyone was expecting.

The four players tied for the lead – Paul Casey, Brooks Koepka, Brian Harman and Tommy Fleetwood – created the largest 36-hole logjam in 43 years at the championship.

None has won a major, and neither had the next 14 players behind them.

On the longest course ever for a major, the cut was the lowest at the US Open since 1990.

And for all the birdies and blunders at Erin Hills, the most compelling image yesterday came from the parking lot, where one star after another left town after missing the cut.

Dustin Johnson. Rory McIlroy. Jason Day.

It was the first time since the world ranking began in 1986 that the top three players missed the cut in any major.

Henrik Stenson. Alex Noren. Jon Rahm. Justin Rose. Adam Scott.

Eight of the top 12 players in the world won't be around for the weekend at Erin Hills, leaving a tournament as open as the land on which it is built.

Casey chopped his way to a triple bogey, only to respond with five straight birdies that carried him to a one-under 71 and make him the first to post at seven-under 137.

He set the target early

under warm sunshine, and even as the wind tapered in the afternoon, nobody could catch him.

Koepka had the lead until he turned a birdie chance into a bogey on the par-5 first hole after making the turn.

He didn't make a birdie the rest of the way and had to settle for a 70. They were joined by Harman and Fleetwood, who each had a 70.

Right behind was a trio of players that included Rickie Fowler, who went 28 holes before making his first bogey and then went three holes without making a par.

Fowler shot a 73 and was still very much in the hunt at a second straight major.

The four-way tie was the most after two rounds in a US Open since Winged Foot in 1974, back when the names were more familiar for a major – Raymond Floyd, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Hale Irwin, who went on to win his first major.

The last six majors have been won by first-timers, and that cycle has a good chance to continue.

The top 18 players on the leaderboard going into the weekend have combined for zero majors. Only a half-dozen of them have even experienced Sunday contention in golf's biggest events.

"Tomorrow will be a very cool experience," Fleetwood said. "It's still Saturday – 36 holes is a very long time in a US Open. Anything can happen."

## McGregor 'has no hope'

FLOYD Mayweather will "annihilate" Conor McGregor in their long-awaited August superfight, according to Jeff Horn, who has already put up his hand to face the winner.

Horn (pictured) challenges former Mayweather foe Manny Pacquiao for the world welterweight boxing title at Suncorp Stadium on July 2 in Australia's biggest ever fight, well aware that Mayweather and Pacquiao generated \$800 million from their 2015 bout.

Horn's American promoter Bob Arum is calculating the marketing potential of Brisbane's clean-cut Fighting Schoolteacher if he can beat Pacquiao before an expected crowd of more than 50,000 at Suncorp in two weeks.



Horn says that McGregor has "absolutely no chance" against Mayweather in Las Vegas on August 26.

Mayweather is unbeaten in 49 pro fights and regarded as the boxer of his generation.

McGregor, a UFC cage fighter, has virtually no boxing experience and looks like a novice in clips of him sparring.

Early indications, though, are the fight could top Mayweather-Pacquiao in income and do more than \$1 billion in business from ticket sales and global television revenues.

"Their fight is going to be under boxing rules and Mayweather will probably not even get hit," Horn said.

## Bosito's storming run with the bat continues

JOSH SPASARO

WILL Bosisto's Bradman-like run continued for the Southern Storm in its comfortable six-wicket win over the City Cyclones in the top-of-the-table Strike League Round 3 clash at Marrara yesterday.

The West Australian representative finished 67 not out from 85 balls, as the Storm chased down its 182-run target in just the 33rd over, maintaining its unbeaten record from three games.

Bosisto has been dismissed just once from his three innings, with a massive aggregate of 373 runs.

"The key (when chasing a low target) is not to change too much – if you go into your shell and aim to get it at the 50-over mark you can get into trouble," he said.

"If you get the basics right in a low or high chase, it shouldn't affect how you play."

Josh Doyle made 65 in the City innings, but the next-nearest highest score was Ash Doolan's 26.

Storm legspinner Kyle Gardiner kept the Cyclones batsmen honest, taking 3-35 from his 10 overs, including Doolan.

Bosisto received assistance from Ben Wakim (31) and Nick Bertus (36).

### SCOREBOARD

**SOUTHERN STORM 4-182** (W Bosisto 67no, N Bertus 36; A Summers 2-50) **d CITY CYCLONES 181** (J Doyle 65, A Doolan 26; K Gardiner 3-35, W Bosisto 2-37) by six wickets at Marrara Cricket Ground  
**DESERT BLAZE 4-262** (A Ross 97no, N Carruthers 85; W Ryan 2-62) **d NORTHERN TIDE 8-257** (A Gregory 89, J Lehmann 44; L Robins 2-52, D Ennis 2-35) by six wickets at Marrara No 2

Meanwhile, Alex Ross smashed 97 not out from 86 balls in the Desert Blaze's six-wicket win over the Northern Tide.

The Tide made a competi-

tive 8-257, with Alex Gregory (89 runs from 117 balls) top-scoring. But Brisbane Heat and South Australian representative Ross' class shone through, with nine fours and four sixes, while opener Nick Carruthers (85 off 50 balls) provided good support.

"It was nice to get a few out of the middle, especially this time of season – everyone back home (in Adelaide) is training indoors," Ross said.

"And we're out here in the beautiful sunshine smacking a few balls to the fence."

The Storm will face the Blaze, and the Tide will go up against the Cyclones today.



Australian captain Steve Smith and his fellow players have not yet signed new Cricket Australia contracts

Picture: STUART FOSTER

ROB FORSAITH

CRICKET Australia has announced a schedule and squad for the trip to Bangladesh but uncertainty about the two-Test tour continues on two fronts.

Steve Smith and his fellow stars will be out of contract at the end of this month and the ongoing pay dispute is no closer to a resolution.

There were discussions this week between Cricket Australia (CA) and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA) but the revenue-sharing model issue remained the stumbling block.

CA has outlined its desire to scrap the model that has shaped players' salaries for 20 years, wanting greater flexibility.

Players have declared they will do whatever it takes to ensure that does not happen.

Australia's Test squad is due to land on August 18 in Bangladesh. The tour risks becoming a farce if CA and the ACA can't agree on a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), or a suitable temporary measure, before then.

"The players love representing their country and want nothing more than to get that opportunity against Bangla-

desh," ACA boss Alistair Nicholson said. "But the reality is all international players are unemployed come 1st July if there is no MoU in place; Cricket Australia seem to be ignoring this reality. "The players can't tour if they are unemployed."

"We are committed to getting an MoU, including a revenue share for all players, finalised by June 30."

Players might also harbour security concerns. The advice from Foreign Affairs is for citizens to "reconsider your need to travel" to Bangladesh. The series was originally planned for 2015. It was delayed be-

cause of advice on the risk of a terrorist attack on Australian nationals.

England toured Bangladesh last year without incident. Australia have been guaranteed the same level of "head of state" security.

"Players selected for this tour will continue to receive regular security status updates prior to travelling," CA high-performance manager Pat Howard said.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board and the Bangladesh Government have provided satisfactory levels of assurance and security for this tour to proceed at this stage."

## Red-hot India face 'written off' Pakistan

WHAT India will likely bring to the Champions Trophy final isn't in doubt.

What Pakistan will bring is in doubt, and there's the intrigue about the showdown tonight at The Oval.

Cricket's biggest rivalry has become a bit of a dud. India has won all of their matchups in global tournaments for the last five years, including two weeks ago on the Trophy's opening weekend. India won by 124

runs, its seventh win out of 10 one-day internationals since 2010.

The final is India's fourth in the last eight global tournaments. The Indians are the defending champions; powerful, purring and perpetual.

"Boring," captain Virat Kohli said. He added, "I don't know there's much that we need to change as a team."

He's right. Their top three batsmen believe they can

chase down anything: Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma lead the tournament scoring list and Kohli is fifth.

Star spinners Ravi Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja no longer dominate the bowling attack but share the load with pacemen Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah.

Pakistan envies that consistency and confidence.

The last team to qualify for the Champions Trophy still

charts a path that resembles a heartbeat on a monitor.

After losing to India in the opener, it squeezed South Africa, hung on to edge Sri Lanka, then crushed title favourite England in the semi-finals to reach its first Trophy final.

"We were written off totally, and probably rightly so, after the Indian clash because we were shambolic. We were terrible," Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said.