

No matter our age, or whether we are avid golfers or just enjoy watching golf, we tend to have our favorite professional golfers that we follow closely, cheer for during tournaments, and idolize as mentors and role models. As the official rankings in golf show us the world's best, some quietly move up the ranks, while others continue to draw large crowds at tournaments no matter where they are on the professional tour money scale.

Our editorial on “Fan Favorites and Future Stars” featured on the next several pages will highlight some of golf fans constant favorites, as well as a few of the up-and-comers who may be destined to do great things in the sport of professional golf.

—*GOLF NOW! Chicago*

FAN FAVORITES **& FUTURES STARS**

By Eric Peschke



LPGA Symetra Tour Player, Tracy Stanford, Tees Off at Blackthorn
—Four Winds Invitational/Courtesy of Scott Miller

Tiger Woods

Still chasing Jack Nicklaus' record of 18 career Major Championships, Tiger Woods has been stuck at 14 since his U.S. Open win at Torrey Pines in 2008. He finished 0-4 in 2013 majors, yet he won five times on the PGA Tour which included the Players Championship and two World Golf Championships. Woods is only four wins away from passing legend Sam Snead for the most PGA Tour wins of all time. As the 2014 season opens you can bet that Tiger has his eyes set on April at Augusta.

Phil Mickelson

Checking off the third leg of the Career Grand Slam with his Open Championship victory at Muirfield in 2013, Phil Mickelson has consistently been one of the top ranked players in the world. With 42 PGA Tour wins, 5 Major Championships, Mickelson's go-for-broke playing style mirrors the fearless tenacity of Arnold Palmer. The only thing missing on Mickelson's resume is a U.S. Open victory, where he has finished second a record six times. Should he capture this elusive title, he would join the list of Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Ben Hogan, and Gene Sarazen as the sixth player to win the Career Grand Slam.



Phil Mickelson Connects With Fans





Tiger Woods Draws The Large Crowds

Adam Scott

Capturing his first Major Championship last April at The Masters, Adam Scott finally broke the Aussie curse that Greg Norman never could. After bogeying the final four holes in the 2012 Open Championship to lose to Ernie Els, many thought Scott didn't have what it took to win a major, but only two majors later he put those worries to bed with his win at Augusta. A teen heart throb when he first joined the PGA Tour in 2000, Scott has amassed 10 tour wins including the 2013 FedEx Cup Barclay's, 2011 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, and the 2004 Players Championship. Only 33 years old he has already checked off a number of qualifiers for a Hall of Fame career.



**2013 Masters Champion,
Adam Scott**

Rickie Fowler

Just like Tiger Woods patented his infamous Sunday red shirt, Rickie Fowler sports his Oklahoma State Cowboys orange shirt and pants every Sunday. Creating his own brand with the help of Puma, Fowler has been a member of the PGA Tour for the last 5 years and earned his first and only PGA Tour victory in a playoff over Rory McIlroy at the Wells Fargo Championship in 2012. A Fowler gallery is always easy to spot with the masses of teenage boys and girls following in his footsteps wearing his signature outfits.

Fred Couples

The famous saying goes, "Women want to be with him, and men want to be him." That pretty much sums up Fred Couples' popularity over the course of his playing career. Earning the nickname "Boom Boom" for his length off the tee back when he used a persimmon driver, Freddie's swing is unmistakably the smoothest in golf. A career highlighted by his win at the 1992 Masters, Couples is now tied with Jack Nicklaus for the most President's Cup victories as a captain with team wins in 2009, 2011, and 2013.

Lexi Thompson

Lexi Thompson seems to always reach her goals earlier than expected. At the age of 12 she became the youngest player to qualify for the U.S. Women's Open. If that feat wasn't enough in 2011 she became the youngest player to win an LPGA Tournament with her victory at the Navistar LPGA Classic. After her win, Thompson petitioned the LPGA Tour to become a member, and despite being two years shy of the required age of 18, the LPGA Tour granted her membership. Never allowing the LPGA to regret their decision, Thompson finished in the top 30 in each of the four Major Championships in 2012, and became the youngest to qualify for the Solheim Cup in 2013.

Jessica Korda

The daughter of tennis great Petr Korda, Jessica qualified to play on the LPGA Tour at the age of 18 and played in 15 events in 2011. Her first LPGA Tour victory came at the 2012 Women's Australian Open where she holed a 25 foot birdie putt on the second playoff hole to win a six player playoff. Notching her first top ten at the U.S. Women's Open this past year at Sebonack Golf Club, Korda went on to qualify for the Solheim Cup and join fellow youngster Lexi Thompson.



**Lexi Thompson,
Star Quality & Fan Favorite**

—Photos by Kenneth E. Dennis/kendennisphoto.com



**Jessica Korda,
Rising Star To Watch**



1987	TIGER WOODS	1997	JUSTIN SIMS
1988	JOE DURANT	1998	SCOTT GORHAM
1989	TIGER WOODS	1999	CHRIS REED
1990	ROBERT ALLENBY	2000	CHRIS REED
1991	SCOTT HOCH	2001	JUSTIN SIMS
1992	JERRY KELLY	2002	SCOTT GORHAM
1993	TIGER WOODS	2003	TIGER WOODS
1994	STEPHEN AMES	2004	TIGER WOODS
1995	JIM FURYK	2005	JIM FURYK
1996	TREVOR IMMELMAN	2006	TREVOR IMMELMAN

Champion Zach Johnson, 2013 BMW Championship
—Photo By Charles Chernin

Zach Johnson

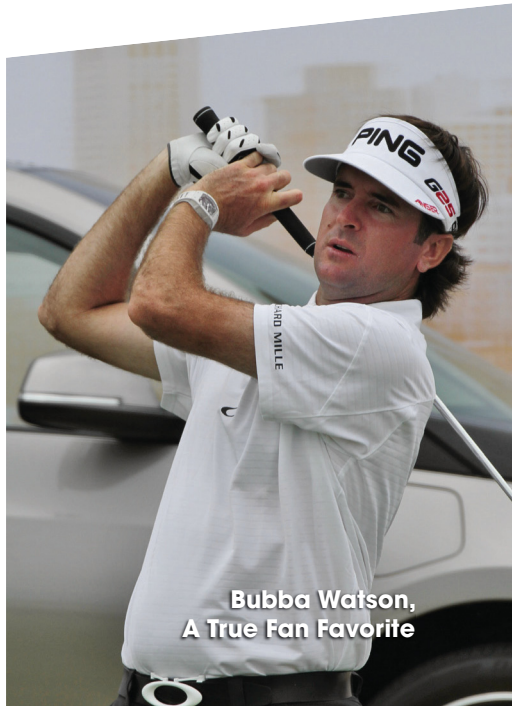
A true Midwesterner, Cedar Rapids, Iowa's own Zach Johnson is proud to be labeled a blue collar worker. In 2003, he topped the Web.com Tour's Money List to earn his PGA Tour card and never looked back. Four years later he was The Masters champion in 2007 which earned him a trip to Wrigley Field to sing "Take Me Out To The Ballgame." At last year's BMW Championship in Chicago, Johnson captured his 10th PGA Tour win, which he will defend in 2014 at Cherry Hills Country Club just outside Denver.

Bubba Watson

With his recent purchase of the "General Lee" from the Dukes of Hazard, Bubba Watson embraces and embodies the Southern lifestyle of his hometown Bagdad, Florida. No matter how many tournaments Gerry Lester Watson Jr. wins in the future, three things are certain. After each win he will always cry, hug and kiss his wife Angie, and speak about how great it is to be a father. A future Payne Stewart Award winner is in the making.



Zach Johnson with Evans Scholars



Bubba Watson,
A True Fan Favorite