



Dale Douglass to make 600th start on Champions Tour



Michael Cohen/PGA TOUR

Dale Douglass, shown here in 2006, will make his 600th Champions Tour start at the U.S. Senior Open.

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By Jeff Szklinski, Champions Tour staff

[Dale Douglass](#) is in the field list for this week's U.S. Senior Open at Inverness. It will be his 600th career start on the Champions Tour. Only [Miller Barber](#) has more, with 603. Douglass, who won three times on the PGA TOUR and 11 times officially on the Champions Tour, will also set a new record by playing in his 26th consecutive U.S. Senior Open. (He was tied with [Arnold Palmer](#) at 25 straight). Jeff Szklinski, Champions Tour staff, spoke to Douglass recently about the upcoming tournament.

Jeff Szklinski: What does making your 600th start on the Champions Tour mean to you after all these years? Do you remember your first start?

Dale Douglass: Well, it's something I never did think about [making 600 starts]. And I found out about it earlier this year, so it's been on my mind. Why not, I might as well go play this one more time. Hopefully I won't embarrass myself.

In my first (pro) tournament, there was no qualifying school. You filled out the forms. The local pro in Denver told me it would take about a month. So a month later I bought a car and drove from Colorado to Pensacola. I showed up there and went to the tour official and said, 'Hello I'm a pro.' I hadn't received my card or anything. He said we don't have you on the list but I'll check tomorrow. He did, and the PGA had just approved my card, and so he let me qualify. A few days later I was the low qualifier at the Pensacola Open in 1960.

Jeff Szklinski: What did it mean to you to be inducted into the Colorado Athletic Hall of Fame, especially given everything you still give back to the University (golf scholarships, etc.)?

Dale Douglass: Anytime someone recognizes you, it's a real honor. It's something that's special. I'm not sure it's always well deserved, but I'm very proud that they've honored me.

Jeff Szklinski: What are your thoughts on CU moving into the "new" Pac 12 this year? How do you think the Buffs will fare?

Dale Douglass: I think it's pretty exciting. I don't know about the recruiting that they will be able to do. Everybody says that area will be tough to get recruits. Colorado is a top school, I hope they come up with some baseball, too, one of these days, but that might be down the road.

Jeff Szklinski: [Hale Irwin](#) said: "If there's anyone outside of my family that has had a direct and significant

contribution, positive contribution to my career, it's been Dale Douglass." Can you talk about your relationship with Hale and how it began?

Dale Douglass: That's very nice of him to say. Hale and I actually met (he doesn't remember) when I was in school and he was a little kid playing in Boulder and we let him play through 'cause he was playing by himself.

But then later in 1967, there was a tournament in Cincinnati that a lot of the pros played in. I got a hold of him and asked if he wanted to play with me, and we actually won that tournament.

So this was the beginning of a very good relationship. He and I played a lot of practice rounds together when he first came out. We played in the PGA four-ball in Oklahoma City on his honeymoon.

Hale was very well-prepared to play the TOUR when he got there, to no real help of mine. We were just good friends.

[On having a place about a par-5 apart right near each other in Arizona]

I talked to him earlier today; I was told I have a big tree that looks like it might fall down in my yard, and he called and said he was going to go take a look at it.

He is a good friend, and a great player and we enjoy each other.

Jeff Szklinski: Can you talk about how your car accident helped you find your game again and bring it to the Champions Tour?

Dale Douglass: Just before we went to the Ryder Cup matches is when that happened. I had a lot of neck problems through the 70's. I was working hard to get back to being a competent player on the TOUR, and right about then the Senior Tour showed up.

It was excellent timing because it was when I was starting to be able to find my golf ball again. I had a great start there. It's been a blessing for a lot of golfers to be able to play on the Champions Tour.

People don't know what to expect when they move to the Champions Tour. A lot of guys now are preparing to do that as they approach 50. All of a sudden, all these kids show up and outdrive them [on the PGA TOUR] and the Champions Tour starts looking pretty nice.

Jeff Szklinski: Since you tend to like the older golf courses (ones made before 1930) that are shorter, do you think something needs to be done to move golf technology into a direction of less "distance"?

Dale Douglass: It's true that the technology has made a lot of courses not play as competitively as they used to. I think that sooner or later they will do something to the golf ball and make it not go quite as far.

Then the golf courses will be back where they would be competitive again. The only other option is making the golf courses longer and longer.

At Augusta, they bought the whole neighborhood and moved houses out to make it longer.

Jeff Szklinski: You won the Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf tournament three times with [Charles Coody](#), and also played on the 1969 Ryder Cup team at Royal Birkdale. What is it about a "team" type of tournament that you enjoy?

Dale Douglass: It's always fun to play with friends and Charles is one of my close friends. The pressures are a little different in team play than in regular play. You're playing not only for yourself, but for your partner as well. Charles and I teamed really well together and somehow we came out ahead.

(On the Ryder Cup): We didn't get to keep the cup actually. That was a tough thing. They allowed the cup to stay in England for one year; then they sent it to us. It wasn't a real popular decision.

We were expecting for them to let us retain the cup. Without checking with us, they decided to let it stay in England. Other than that though, playing in the Ryder Cup was a very nice experience.

Jeff Szklinski: At Inverness this year, a few guys will be playing on some familiar territory. Hale Irwin won the U.S. Open here in 1979, [John Cook](#) grew up in Toledo (and went to Ohio State), [Joey Sindelar](#) and [Rod Spittle](#) both went to Ohio State. What was it like for you to be able to play in the U.S. Senior Open at the Broadmoor [2008] a few years ago in your home state?

Dale Douglass: I played in the Open at Cherry Hills [in Denver] in '78 too. Anytime you are playing close to home, it's nice to have a lot of people there pulling for you. It's inspiring where you can know that they are there rooting you on.

It's not a distraction though. If you are doing this and have done it for a while, like me, you are used to having people around.

I enjoyed the Broadmoor, but unfortunately I didn't play very well in that tournament.

In '93 we played the Senior Open at Cherry Hills, which unfortunately I should have won but didn't.

Jeff Szklinski: You were vice president of the PGA in 1972. What was that experience like?

Dale Douglass: I was on the PGA TOUR policy board. We had one representative on the PGA Board. I drew the short straw. Actually, I went to all the meetings and made some nice friends and got an opportunity to meet a few people, which was great. It was a one-year stint, but they didn't ask me to do anything special other than just to be there.

It was a time when we had a lot of harmony with the PGA as opposed to a few years before that, so we were getting along well.

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Green Bay Packers K Mason Crosby confident about return to team

Written by

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Mason Crosby didn't hear anything from the GreenBayPackers on Tuesday, the first day NFL teams were allowed to negotiate with unrestricted free agents following the lockout, but the team's kicker the last four years didn't sound too concerned.

In fact, the Texas native has been in Green Bay most of the offseason and is in town now awaiting a new deal with the team that drafted him in the sixth round in 2007.

"There's nothing in place as of right now," Crosby said Tuesday. "I think we're talking some (soon) hopefully."

Crosby has been operating under the assumption he would be back with the Packers this season.

"Obviously there's a lot of uncertainty just as the whole lockout has been going," he said. "But prior to it, we had some good conversations, and I think both sides seem to be very happy. I know I've been so happy here the last four years. I love my

teammates, love the city, so I'm really hopeful and confident we'll have some good talks the next couple of days and get something done. I've heard nothing but positives coming out of Green Bay, too. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed and praying and hoping for the best, and I think these next couple of days should be exciting."

Veteran free agents can't sign until 5 p.m. Friday, but handshake deals will certainly be in place before then.

"Yeah, that's the hope, to try to get something done by Wednesday or Thursday and then be able to sign off at 5 p.m. on Friday," Crosby said.

Crosby has been staying prepared.

"I've been kicking and doing my thing and just hoping to get something figured out with them in the next couple of days, so we can get back to work," Crosby said.

He said he was a little surprised and

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disappointed by the rule that says free agents, even if they re-sign with their own team, can't practice until Aug. 4, which is expected to be first day of the new league year.

"That's a little bit of a bummer," Crosby said.

Last summer, the Packers didn't bring in any competition for Crosby in training camp. He made 22 of 28 field goals in the regular season and has a career percentage of 78.1.

Harrell's future: Now that the Packers have told linebacker Nick Barnett his tenure with the team is over, defensive end Justin Harrell might be next on the list.

Though Harrell's base salary this season is only \$650,000, the oft-injured former first-round draft pick is due a roster bonus of \$575,000, which almost certainly would have to be paid on the first day of the league year. It seems unlikely the Packers would want to invest any additional money in Harrell.

Harrell's agent, however, said he has no indication the Packers intend to cut ties with Harrell, who has had chronic back problems and then sustained a season-ending knee injury in the season opener last year. Harrell, the 16th overall pick in the 2007 draft, has appeared in only 14 regular-season games in his four seasons and only one in the last two years.

"They haven't told us anything," agent

Eugene Parker said. "I haven't spoken with (Harrell) because there was no real need. They haven't given us any notice that we should be alarmed right now."

Parker said Harrell would like another shot with the Packers.

"His only feel is that it's in their hands," Parker said.

Spitz wants to start: Backup offensive lineman Jason Spitz is looking for a chance to start at center though he's still on the radar to re-sign with the Packers.

Spitz, a third-round draft pick in 2006, was a starting guard for most of his first three years with the Packers and a backup center and guard last season after a debilitating lower-back injury derailed him in the 2009 season.

Center is Spitz's best position, but the Packers are set at starter there with Scott Wells and have a young backup they like in Nick McDonald, though they are interested

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in re-signing Spitz as a backup there and at guard. Brian Ayrault, Spitz's agent, said four teams, including from within the NFC North, called Tuesday to express interest in signing his client.

"We have an interest in starting at center, and that's what we're looking to do in free agency and that's what we're discussing with clubs in the division and outside the division," Ayrault said. "Obviously the Packers have an interest in Jason. I've talked with them about that, but we're going to have to wait and see what opportunities present themselves. We've had four calls today so far, so we're pretty confident something good is going to happen for him."

Odds and ends: Though free-agent fullback John Kuhn would like to return to Green Bay, he's not ruling out the possibility of going elsewhere if there's an offer he can't refuse. In an email on Tuesday, his agent, Kevin Gold said: "Nothing to report today. Still seeing what the market is at this point." ... There was little movement in contract negotiations with draft picks, who also could begin signing on Tuesday. Several sources indicated that teams were more immediately focused on signing undrafted free agents, dealing with veteran free agents and deciding which veteran players to release. ... The Packers did not announce their training camp practice schedule. All they have said is their first practice is Saturday evening.

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