

# Rose sets Torrey Pines pace with 62, Koepka struggles

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Justin Rose had birdie chances on all but one hole Thursday and turned that into a 10-under 62 on the easier North course at Torrey Pines, giving him a one-shot lead in the Farmers Insurance Open on a day that marked the return of Brooks Koepka from LIV Golf.

Koepka garnered so much of the attention under the brilliant sunshine along the Pacific Coast, the first PGA Tour member to leave for the Saudi-funded rival league only to get out of his contract with one year left and be allowed to return.

Koepka didn't make a birdie until his final hole on the tougher South course for a 1-over 73 and was happy to get that first round behind him.

"From the first tee on, it was great. It actually made me settle down a little bit," Koepka said. "Like I said, it made me feel good just to be out here."

Rose missed the cut in his 2026 debut in The American Express last week. While the North course is easier, his game was sharp. Even without birdies on two of the par 5s, he still posted a great score before he heads to the South.

Justin Lower, on edge with his wife at home about to give birth to twins, had a 63 on the North. Hideki Matsuyama and Max Greamer each had a 64.

Seamus Power had the low score at 65 on the South course, which has hosted two U.S. Opens and played to an average score of 72.482. The average score on the North was 69.139. Of the 22 players at 67 or lower, only Power and Max McGreevy (66) were on the South.

"North Course clearly is one that you want to try to make the most of and it's great to do that today for

sure," Rose said.

He made par from the fairway on his closing hole at the par-5 ninth, finding a bunker, blasting out to about 4 feet and missing the birdie putt. But he only scrambled for once, on the 451-yard 14th hole and kept a clean card.

Lower lost his full card last year when the PGA Tour reduced full status to the top 100 on the FedEx Cup, down from 125 in previous years. Lower got into Torrey Pines because of the 147-man field over two courses, so this about making the most of an opportunity.

And what a time. He already has a 3-year-old. Now his wife is about to deliver twins.

"If I'm being really truthful with everyone, my mind's not really here," Lower said. "My wife is 34 weeks pregnant with twins and I'm

just trying to get home on Monday to try to help everything out as much as I can. Luckily we have family close and everything. Yeah, she's going through it right now. Life's about to get real if it wasn't real already."

Xander Schauffele, who was born across the road from Torrey Pines, played for the first time since he won in Japan last fall. He has the longest active cut streak at 72 and was on the ropes early on the South, 3 over for his round through 11 holes.

But he made birdie from a fairway bunker on the 12th hole, hit the pin with a shot from the back bunker to set up birdie on the par-5 13th and ended his round with a chip that struck the pin on the 18th when it the golf ball was rolling at flag speed.

It added to a 73, just above average considering how hard the South played.

"I was happy with the fight," Schauffele said. "But I only hit three fairways, and the North course also is hard from the rough. Any of those guys at 8 or 9 under on the North are hitting more than two or three fairways."

And with that he was off to the range.

Koepka said he was nervous on the first tee on the South, not knowing what kind of response he would get from the crowd after defecting to LIV Golf. He hit a 301-yard drive and an approach to 10 feet, two of his best shots of the way.

But his birdie chances were limited — certainly not as many as Rose on the North — and he was 1 over on the par 5s until an 8-foot birdie putt on the last hole.

He looked forward to the next three days. That starts with getting to the weekend.

## Volkanovski faces Lopes in rematch at UFC 325 in Sydney

SYDNEY (AP) — Diego Lopes seemed almost like an afterthought this week at UFC 325 media day.

Some questions directed at featherweight champion Alexander Volkovski concerned whom he might fight next after facing Lopes on Sunday.

The odds, however, suggest this might not be such an easy fight for Volkovski.

He is a -145 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook to defeat Lopes (27-7) for the second time in nine months. Volkovski (27-4) conceded he couldn't take a repeat victory for granted after defeating the Brazilian by unanimous decision at UFC 314 on April 12 in Miami.

"You've got to respect (Lopes' power)," Volkovski said. "There's going to be a lot of opportunities

for me to capitalize when he's that aggressive, but at the same time, you're going to have that threat of him always looking for the KO. Even if it goes to the ground, always looking for the submission. That's how he fights. That's why he's so dangerous."

Volkovski saw that up close in their prior meeting, getting floored in the second round and staggered by a punch to his eye in the fourth. Lopes then tried to finish him off in the fourth, but Volkovski held his ground and wound up winning.

"I know I made a lot of mistakes in the first fight with Volk," said Lopes, the second-ranked challenger. "I forgot things in my game plan. I think I fixed it in the training camp. I fixed many things, so it's completely different now."

Volkovski, who wore a Los Angeles Kings cap at the news conference, will have the home-country advantage. That certainly makes the bout more challenging for Lopes, who otherwise is one of the UFC's more popular fighters.

The 31-year-old knows he won't be on Sunday afternoon (Saturday night EST).

"I'm not worried about it (being booted)," Lopes said. "I left my home 11 days ago. For me, it's not new. Whatever place Volk fights, people are supporting him, but I'm up for this."

So is Volkovski, who last fought in Australia three years ago when he lost by unanimous decision to Islam Makhachev for the lightweight championship in the main event at UFC 284. That loss before

a sellout crowd of 13,000 energetic fans in Perth ended Volkovski's 22-match winning streak.

Maybe this weekend will provide a different result.

"I want to have a big moment here," Volkovski said. "That's what I love about being here in Sydney because whenever I'm traveling away, everyone can't be there live. They can't be in the arena and feel the atmosphere."

"I want to go out there and look dominant and really give more of my supporters, family and friends that feeling or that moment that they're going to remember forever. They still get that feeling at home through the TV, but there ain't nothing like it Down Under. I can only imagine what that's going to be like walking out."

How many more times the 37-year-old Volkovski continues to walk into the octagon remains to be seen. He made it clear, however, that retirement isn't on his mind.

Volkovski, in responses to media questions, speculated about future potential matchups and that if he beats Lopes, he wants to take on the highest-ranked challenger.

"I plan on taking minimal damage out there, having a quick turnaround and then we'll see what happens after that," Volkovski said. "You're seeing a lot of rumors. You're seeing a lot of people, 'Aha, this is going to be his last one.' Obviously, I put that to bed. Definitely not the right time for this. I've still got a bit left in me. That's why I want to be active because how much longer?"

### THE DAILY SCOREBOARD

#### NFL PLAYOFFS

Wild-card Playoffs							
Saturday, Jan. 10							
L.A. Rams 34, Carolina 31							
Chicago 31, Green Bay 27							
<b>Sunday, Jan. 11</b>							
Buffalo 27, Jacksonville 24							
San Francisco 23, Philadelphia 19							
New England 16, L.A. Chargers 3							
<b>Monday, Jan. 12</b>							
Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6							
<b>Divisional Playoffs</b>							
<b>Saturday, Jan. 17</b>							
Denver 33, Buffalo 30, OT							
Seattle 41, San Francisco 6							
<b>Sunday, Jan. 18</b>							
New England 28, Houston 16							
L.A. Rams 20, Chicago 17, OT							
<b>Conference Championships</b>							
<b>Sunday, Jan. 25</b>							
New England 10, Denver 7, AFC							
Seattle 31, L.A. Rams 27							
<b>Super Bowl LIX</b>							
<b>Sunday, Feb. 8</b>							
At Santa Clara.							
New England vs. Seattle, 6:30 p.m. (NBC/Peacock)							

#### SCHOLASTIC BASKETBALL BOXSCORES

##### VARSITY BOYS

##### HICKORY (55)

White 4-0-8, Slevin 7-8-13, Mele 1-1-23, Borowicz

3-3-9, Boal 2-2-7, Kovac 7-0-14, Distler 0-1-2.

Totals: 20-14-55.

##### GROVE CITY (50)

Knouse 3-3-10, Mariacher 0-0-2, Earman 1-0-0,

Osborn 1-2-4, Fischer 14-2-30, Gamble 1-2-3.

Totals: 20-7-12.

##### Score by Quarters

Hickory 16 11 15 13 — 55

Grove City 15 7 16 12 — 50

3-point goals — Hickory (Boal), GC (Knouse, Earman, Osborn).

##### VARSITY GIRLS

##### CONNEAUT AREA (45)

Potts 1-0-2, Morin 1-0-2, Perrine 6-7-12, 21, Detelich 1-0-3, Dendis 5-0-10, Wolf 3-0-7. Totals: 17-7-24.

##### OIL CITY (43)

Boocks 7-0-0, Kasunic 0-0-0, Vargason 1-0-2,

Fry 0-0-0, Liederbach 2-5-6, Smith 4-2-10, S.

Garmont 0-2-6, 2. Totals: 14-9-16.

##### Score by Quarters

Conneaut 10 7 11 17 — 45

Oil City 9 13 13 8 — 43

3-point goals — Conneaut (Perry 2, Detelich, Wolf, OC (Boocks 6).

##### FRANKLIN (51)

Cullins 4-0-9, Blum 2-4-4, Hanna 4-2-13, Ma-

Shingleder 0-2-0, Emick 2-2-6, Sanchez 0-2-0,

Boal 4-1-2, Mi. Shingleder 1-3-4, Graham 0-0-0

0, Irons 0-0-0. Totals: 17-12-51.

##### MEADVILLE (31)

Jordan 1-0-2, Luterman 6-3-15, Hall 2-2-7, K. Gon-

gaware 2-0-5, Wilson-Dixon 1-0-2. Totals: 12-5-31.

##### Score by Quarters

Franklin 13 13 19 6 — 51

Meadville 7 4 10 10 — 31

3-point goals — FHS (Hanna 3, Cullins