

## COCKERILL TRENDING UPWARD IN WORLD OF GOLF

Most Canadian golf fans are aware of our country's most accomplished professionals — Corey Connors, Adam Hadwin, Mackenzie Hughes top that list — but there's another pro making tremendous strides on the world golf stage.

Aaron Cockerill doesn't generate many headlines in North America, but he's a solid player on the DP World Tour, and the Manitoba native could be on the verge of breaking through to the big time. Becoming a regular on the PGA Tour is not the least bit farfetched for Cockerill, whose world ranking was 295 on May 1, up from 489 at the start of the year, after a successful four-week run that produced second- and third-place finishes and two others in the top 30.

Cockerill says his immediate goal is “to win an event over here and if and when that happens, I think the floodgates could open.”

Growing up in Stony Mountain, near Winnipeg, Cockerill played his golf at Teulon Golf Club. He had a stellar amateur career, winning the Manitoba Match Play twice, a Manitoba junior and a Western Canadian junior.

As a young pro, Cockerill played the Mackenzie Tour (Canadian) for three years before moving to the Korn Ferry Tour, one notch below the PGA Tour, but he had limited status at that level. So he headed for Europe, qualifying for that tour at age 27 and he's now in his third year on the second-strongest tour in the world.

“I'm happy in Europe for now,” said Cockerill. “I'll get a taste of the PGA Tour at the Canadian Open in June.”

Cockerill's improved scoring is a direct result of hard work, he says. He has added distance off the tee and he's making more putts. In fact, he's statistically second on the greens on the DP World Tour, behind only South Africa's Shaun Norris. His putter was red hot April 23 at the ISPS Handa Championship in Spain, where he fired a third-round 62 to move into the co-lead, but he was overtaken on the final day and had to settle for third place. In four weeks, he earned more than 270,000 Euros and was as high as 25th in the DP World Tour rankings.

Cockerill is certainly racking up the frequent flyer miles. He and his wife Chelsea were married last fall and while she caddied for him all of last season, she has returned to Winnipeg and works as a realtor. “She came out this year to Qatar and will most likely come for another trip this summer,” said Cockerill. “I hate the winters at home so avoid them all together.” In the summer, he'll play three weeks in Europe and then head to Manitoba for two.

His travel schedule may get easier if his PGA Tour goal is fulfilled. And he's certainly trending in the right direction.

- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: “TMZ reports Dallas Cowboy owner, **Jerry Jones**, is lucky not to be seriously hurt after he t-boned a car at a high rate of speed. Apparently Jones drives about as well as his Cowboys play playoff games.”
- **Greg Cote** of the Miami Herald, on the legal problems faced by Dodgers' pitcher **Trevor Bauer**, who was given a two-year suspension by MLB for sexual assault allegations: “Bauer quickly announced he would be appealing. Ironically, it seems very little about Bauer is appealing.”
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: “Tennis legend **Boris Becker** was sentenced to two and a half years in jail for hiding assets following his bankruptcy. The only thing this ace is going to be serving is time.”
- Headline at fark.com: “NFL finds it is impossible to tell if the Cleveland Browns are tanking on purpose or if they are simply just being the Cleveland Browns.”
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: “**Phil Mickelson** racked up gambling losses of \$40 million from 2010 to 2014, according to author **Alan Shipnuck** in his forthcoming biography of the PGA star. You just know some wiseacre will be screaming ‘Get out of the hole!’ the next time he putts.”
- Another one from Perry: “Former Patriots tackle **Matt Light**, 43, lost out in a four-person race to win one of two seats on the Foxborough School Committee. Or, to put it in football terms, he came up third-and-short.”
- Comedy writer **Brad Dickson**, on Russian leader **Vladimir Putin** purportedly having a former Olympic gymnast as a girlfriend: “OK, all you people who believe in karma — explain this one?”
- Another one from Currie, about the dad in Cincinnati who made a one-handed catch of a foul ball while bottle-feeding his baby with the other hand. “He earned a rookie jersey for his infant son and a contract offer from the Reds.”
- Golf writer **Eamon Lynch**, on the upstart LIV Golf Tour: “Finally, a reason to root for the Saudis — they'll take **Sergio Garcia**.”
- Comedy guy **Steve Burgess** of Vancouver, on goal announcements in the NHL playoffs: “Home team goals are announced like the discovery of insulin, and visiting team goals like the disclaimers at the end of anti-depressant commercials.”

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