

Golf

Spieth looking to dial back the expectations

By DOUG FERGUSON
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PALM HARBOR, Fla. — Jordan Spieth feels his game is in about the same spot as last year going into the Valspar Championship, which turned out to be the start of big run that carried him all the way to a green jacket.

The difference is that eight-shot victory to start the year in Hawaii, and the expectations that came along with it.

Spith knew he was going to be a target this year. He is No. 1 in the world, the Masters and U.S. Open champion who made a bold pursuit of the Grand Slam. And then he blew away the winners-only field at Kapalua in his first start of 2016, and winning felt easy.

Maybe too easy.

“You want to set high-end, borderline unrealistic expectations for yourself because if you get anywhere close to it you’re going to be there,” Spieth said Wednesday. “But there’s a balance that I needed to find. It’s been a learning experience this year.”

A year ago, Spieth had three top 10s, a missed cut at Torrey Pines and a tie for 17th at Doral, a course that doesn't seem to suit him or anyone else who doesn't hammer tee shots 300 yards in the air.

Throw out the eight-shot win at Kapalua this year, and Spieth has a pair of top 10s, a missed cut and another tie for 17th at Doral.

Spieth is the defending champion at the Valspar Championship, which gets lost among the Florida Swing on the PGA Tour but still manages to attract a strong field because of the Copperhead Course at Innisbrook. Henrik Stenson,

