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### First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Grayson Murray	64 (-7)
	Charlie Saxon	64 (-7)
3	Tyler Duncan	65 (-6)
	Hank Lebioda	65 (-6)
	Mark Anderson	65 (-6)
	Tom Hoge	65 (-6)

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### Grayson Murray, Charlie Saxon share first-round lead at Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco

**BOISE, Idaho** — Grayson Murray and Charlie Saxon carded rounds of 7-under 64 at Hillcrest Country Club and share the first-round lead at the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco. In the second of three tournaments in the Korn Ferry Tour Finals, Murray is looking to strengthen his status on the PGA TOUR for the 2019-20 season, while Saxon has a chance to earn his TOUR card for the first time.

Murray was exempt on the PGA TOUR this season by virtue of his win at the 2017 Barbasol Championship, but his year was cut short by a lower-back injury that originated in 2018. After he “tweaked it pretty bad” at the Valero Texas Open in April, Murray withdrew and didn’t touch a club for two months in order for the inflammation to reduce.

His first start after the injury was a T2 finish at the REX Hospital Open in June, and he’s coming off a T23 finish at the first Finals event, the Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship. He took a medical exemption and will have 12 starts on TOUR next season, but a finish in The Finals 25 will guarantee him a full schedule for 2019-20.

“My goal was to be feeling good going into these Playoffs,” said Murray, who is playing back-to-back weeks for the first time since March. “Like any of us out here, if we’re playing decent or swinging decent we want to keep it going. I’m glad that my body is feeling good enough to do it.”

After averaging 30.5 putts per round last week in Columbus, Murray needed just 25 putts in his 7-under 64 on Thursday. It was his third straight 64 at Hillcrest Country Club, as he carded weekend rounds of 64-64 to finish third at the 2016 Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco.

“With the breeze it got pretty tricky and there are definitely some pins that we were having to steer 20, 30 feet away from just with the wind,” Murray said. “Usually, around this place, you want to fire at everything, so it’s holding its own. I felt like 7-under was a really good score out there.”

For Saxon, his first-round 64 was a step towards a promotion to the PGA TOUR. Entering this week, Saxon had missed the cut in three of his last four starts, including a 73-79 performance last week at the Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship. He hit just 7 of 14 fairways and 10 of 18 greens on Thursday, but he needed only 20 putts – including one-putts on his last 10 holes.

“It wasn’t the cleanest round, I don’t even think I hit that many greens, but when I was in trouble, I was able to give myself a good look at par,” said Saxon, who matched his season-best score on Thursday. “My putts per greens in regulation must have been really low because when I did hit the green, I was pouring in the birdie putts.”

Saxon posted seven top-25s and finished the regular season 40th on the points list. He has secured status on the Korn Ferry Tour for next year, and that level of job security has eased the pressure of the Finals.

“I’d love to play on the PGA TOUR next year, it’s been a lifelong dream that I have a chance to achieve, but at the same time, I know that another year out here wouldn’t be the worst thing with some more time to get better,” Saxon said. “So I’m just treating it as an opportunity, and if I play well the next three days then I will get my TOUR card, and if not, then the world isn’t going to end.”

Four players are tied for third after rounds of 6-under 65. Hank Lebioda (148th), Tom Hoge (159th) and Tyler Duncan (163rd) finished No. 126-200 in the FedExCup this year and are looking to return to the PGA TOUR, while Mark Anderson finished No. 14 in The 25 and secured his TOUR card for the third time and first since 2016-17.

The Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco is the second of three events in the Korn Ferry Tour Finals. The 2019 season concludes next week at the Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance, where The Finals 25 will earn their PGA TOUR cards for the 2019-20 season.

Friday’s second-round tee times will run in two waves off of the first and 10<sup>th</sup> tees from 7:30 a.m. to 2:20 p.m.

#### **THURSDAY NOTES:**

- \* Thursday’s weather: Sunny with a high of 84. Winds NW 10-15 miles per hour.
- \* This week marks the penultimate event of the Korn Ferry Tour Finals, a three-event series that concludes at the Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance next week in Evansville, Indiana. Twenty-five PGA TOUR cards were awarded following the WinCo Foods Portland Open presented by KraftHeinz. An additional 25 cards are up for grabs during the three Finals events, as well as positioning for all 50 cards.
- \* Six of 25 first-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win this season, most recently Nelson Ledesma at the TPC Colorado Championship at Heron Lakes. Last year’s champion, Sangmoon Bae, sat T2 after the first round before going on to share the lead over the next two rounds and claim a one-stroke victory on Sunday.
- \* Co-leader Charlie Saxon (-7) leads the field in both average driving distance (381 yards) and total putts (20). Saxon ranks fourth on Tour in driving distance at 319.5, but just T67 in putts per round with an average of 29.39.
- \* Tyler Duncan (-6, T3) went eagle-eagle on Nos. 15 and 16 before eventually carding an opening 65. The back-to-back eagles were the first time he had ever had two eagles in a row. Two weeks ago at the WinCo Foods Portland Open, Chris Naegel went eagle-ace during the final round.

\* Dan McCarthy (-5, T7) was one of two players to win on Tour this season but finish outside The 25 and fail to earn a PGA TOUR card through the Regular Season. The 34-year-old Le Moyne College alum is seeking his first PGA TOUR card in his third full season on the Korn Ferry Tour.

\* Six-time PGA TOUR champion Stewart Cink (E, T79) is competing on the Korn Ferry Tour since being named Player of the Year during a historic 1996 season. In addition to three wins in 1996, Cink earned 14 top-10s in just 21 starts, the second-most in a single season in the Tour's history.

\* The highest first-round score by an eventual champion in Boise is 2-under 69, carded by Carl Paulson (1999) and Chris Tidland (2008). Fifty-four players currently sit at 2-under or better through 18 holes.

\* Chris Baker (-3, T19) missed the cut last week at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship but carded an opening round 68 on Thursday. Baker finished 26<sup>th</sup> in the Regular Season points list, but recent history is on his side. Two of the last three players to finish 26<sup>th</sup> in the Regular Season have gone on to earn their PGA TOUR card, and those players have combined for five victories already on the PGA TOUR (Xander Schauffele, Keith Mitchell).

\* Entering its 30th year, the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft Nabisco is one of four original tournaments from 1990 that are still on the Korn Ferry Tour schedule. The Knoxville Open, the Wichita Open Supporting Wichita's Youth and the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper round out the original tournaments from 1990.

\* This week's purse is \$1,000,000, with \$180,000 going to the champion. The champion will also receive 1000 Korn Ferry Tour points.

\* Sixty-seven former Korn Ferry Tour champions are competing in the field, amounting to 97 victories, as well as 19 PGA TOUR champions (equaling 44 victories).

\* The par-3 eighth hole (213 yards) ranked as the toughest hole on the course on Thursday with a scoring average of 3.357.

\* The par-5 16<sup>th</sup> hole (535 yards) ranked as the easiest hole on Thursday with an average of 4.132. The hole is on pace to play as the easiest hole on Tour this year (relative to scoring average). The easiest hole so far this season was the par-5 16<sup>th</sup> hole at Lakewood National Golf Club during the inaugural LECOM Suncoast Classic, which played to an average of 4.294.

**\* Hillcrest Country Club Scoring Average:**

	Front (36)	Back (35)	Total (71)	Cumulative
R1	35.837	34.209	70.047	

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