

Final-Round Notes – Sunday, April 4, 2021

Course Setup: Par 70 / 6,891 yards

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Final Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Stephan Jaeger	67-67-66-66—266 (-14)
2	David Lipsky	68-64-67-67—266 (-14)
3	Andrew Novak	62-67-67-71—267 (-13)
4	Erik Barnes	74-65-66-63—268 (-12)
T5	Three Tied	269 (-11)

* Won with a par on the first playoff hole (No. 18)

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Stephan Jaeger wins playoff at Emerald Coast Classic at Sandestin, secures PGA TOUR return

MIRAMAR BEACH, Fla. – Even for someone who’s won as much as Stephan Jaeger, nerves inevitably creep in come the back nine on a Sunday. Jaeger pulled his drive into the water on the par-4 11th, but saved a bogey, bounced back with a birdie at No. 12, and eventually survived a playoff with David Lipsky to win the Emerald Coast Classic at Sandestin and capture the sixth title of his Korn Ferry Tour career.

Jaeger carded a 4-under 66 with six birdies and two bogeys. The Munich, Germany native made his second bogey at the 522-yard 11th, which once again played into the wind was Raven Golf Club’s toughest hole.

“The nerves got to me on No. 11 today, and I hit a bad tee shot and hit it in the water,” Jaeger said. “This golf course will really test you mentally because it’s so intimidating off the tee some holes. Nos. 9 and 11 are probably the two hardest tee shots I’ve ever hit in my life. I got away with a few, and I hit some in trouble, too. The bounce back was really big for me to keep close to the lead.”

Jaeger followed the bogey at No. 11 with a birdie at the par-3 12th, then birdies at Nos. 14 and 17. An 8-footer for birdie at the par-4 18th slid by, leaving the door open for Lipsky.

Lipsky erased a bogey at the short par-4 15th with birdies at Nos. 17 and 18 to force a playoff.

Jaeger flew his approach within 15 feet on the playoff hole, No. 18, while Lipsky left himself a relatively long birdie try. Lipsky, who birdied the 18th all four rounds this week, raced his putt 10 feet past the cup and missed the comebacker for his only three-putt of the tournament. Jaeger two-putted for par.

“David is a good putter,” Jaeger said. “It’s just the nerves. It’s a hard game.”

Jaeger finished the week tied for second in putts per round (25.75) and seventh in scrambling (16 of 23).

“I didn’t feel like I had the best stuff. I was just trying to figure out how to find something I could play with,” Jaeger said. “I knew my short game was on point. I just tried to keep the ball in front of me, keep it on fairways, keep it in play, and give myself as many opportunities with the putter as I could. It was, mentally, a lot harder than other wins. The other ones, I was on. I never felt like I could miss a shot. I definitely did this week, which makes it feel even better.”

Jaeger’s six career victories move him within one of Jason Gore’s all-time record. Jaeger joins Pat Bates, Matt Gogel, Kevin Johnson, and Sean Murphy as the only players in Korn Ferry Tour history with six wins. Sunday’s win also vaults Jaeger from eighth to second in the Korn Ferry Tour points standings, securing his return to the PGA TOUR.

Jaeger previously graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour following the 2017 season and spent two years on the PGA TOUR. Between those seasons, Jaeger had to earn his TOUR card at the 2018 Korn Ferry Tour Finals.

Jaeger believes he has the game to win on the PGA TOUR this time around, with consistency being the differentiating factor from his previous stints.

“The two years I was on TOUR, it took me a couple years to get comfortable,” Jaeger said. “I’m striving to get out on the PGA TOUR and feel comfortable every week and get myself in a position to win out there. It’s great to win out here. It’s a great stepping stone. But my ultimate goal is to win on the PGA TOUR, and win multiple times. That’s been my goal ever since I started winning mini-tour events.”

Sunday’s other prominent storyline was Nick Hardy’s 10-under 60, a career-low round which broke the course record of 61 established by Georgia Southern’s Steven Fisk at the 2019 Sun Belt Conference Championship.

The University of Illinois alumnus made 10 birdies and eight pars, and left an eagle putt six inches short at the par-5 17th. Hardy’s 60 is the lowest round in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned tournament since Dustin Johnson and Scottie Scheffler shot an 11-under 60 and 12-under 59, respectively, at THE NORTHERN TRUST last August. It is also the lowest Korn Ferry Tour score since Chris Baker’s 11-under 60 at the 2019 REX Hospital Open.

“If playing first on Sunday doesn’t motivate you, I don’t know what will. I just went for it,” said Hardy, who teed off at 7:20 a.m. local time. “I had a good break go my way on No. 5. It was lucky I was right next to the cart path, and I was able to get a free drop in the pine straw. I hit a punch 8-iron from 120 (yards) to 15 feet and made the putt. Once I made the birdie on No. 9, I was like, ‘Alright, we’ve got a real shot at it.’ I wasn’t really nervous until after I made birdie on No. 15. I knew I had a real shot at (shooting 59).

“Every point matters,” continued Hardy, who began the day at T64 and ended it T17, a difference of 43 points in the Korn Ferry Tour standings. “You’ve got to grind it out. You never know what’s going to happen when it comes down to the last few events.”

Sunday Notes

- Jaeger has six top-10s in his last nine Korn Ferry Tour starts, a stretch which began with a win at the Albertsons Boise Open last August
- David Lipsky (2nd / -14) had a streak of 52 consecutive holes without a bogey end at the par-3 6th
- Andrew Novak (3rd / -13) only had three bogeys and one double bogey in his first three rounds; he made three bogeys and two double bogeys Sunday
- Novak finished inside the top 20 for the first time since his victory at the LECOM Suncoast Classic in February 2020; he entered the week with 13 missed cuts in his 19 starts since the win
- Novak was the seventh player to hold a three-stroke lead after 54 holes this season (only three converted the lead into a victory)
- For a second consecutive week, a bid to become the Korn Ferry Tour's first wire-to-wire winner since Kramer Hickok at the 2018 DAP Championship presented by NewBrick came up short
- Erik Barnes (4th / -12) carded a final-round 63 with eight birdies and an eagle for his fourth top-10 in 43 starts since the beginning of 2019 and his first top-10 since a T3 at last July's TPC Colorado Championship at Heron Lakes
- Nick Hardy's previous career-low round as a professional was a 7-under 63 at the 2021 Sony Open in Hawaii, a PGA TOUR event, and 2020 Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics
- Hardy posted one of Sunday's two bogey-free rounds, with Brandon Crick (67) recording the other
 - Crick (T13 / -8) also posted a bogey-free 68 Thursday; he and Lipsky were the only players with multiple bogey-free rounds this week
- Monday qualifiers Josh Hart (T10 / -9) and Peyton White (T15 / -7) both qualified for the next Korn Ferry Tour event – MGM Resorts Championship at Paiute
- Sunday's Weather: mostly sunny, high of 65 degrees, wind E/SE at 5-10 mph
- This week's purse was \$600,000 with \$108,000 going to the champion, Stephan Jaeger; he also received 500 Korn Ferry Tour points
- The Emerald Coast Classic at Sandestin was the fourth event of 2021 and the 27th of the 2020-21 combined season
- The combined 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour schedule will conclude with 25 PGA TOUR cards awarded in August at the 2021 Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna, with an additional 25 cards awarded at the conclusion of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Finals

Final-Round Course Statistics

- Toughest Hole – No. 11, Par 4, 522 yards (4.333 – three birdies, 17 bogeys, four double bogeys)
- Easiest Hole – No. 3, Par 5, 587 yards (4.636 – one eagle, 33 birdies, nine bogeys or worse)
- Scoring Average (Front 9) – 34.667
- Scoring Average (Back 9) – 35.000
- Scoring Average (Total) – 69.667

Cumulative Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Front 9) – 35.391
- Scoring Average (Back 9) – 35.027
- Scoring Average (Total) – 70.418