

First-Round Notes – Thursday, May 27, 2021

Course Setup: Par 71 / 7,225 yards

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Nick Hardy	64 (-7)
	Cameron Young	64 (-7)
3	Adam Svensson	65 (-6)
4	Taylor Dickson	66 (-5)
T5	Tom Whitney	67 (-4)
	Vince India	67 (-4)

Quick Links

- [Leaderboard](#)
- [Tee Times](#)
- [Tournament Media Site](#) (interviews and other resources available for download)

Nick Hardy shares lead with red-hot Cameron Young at Evans Scholars Invitational presented by First Midwest Bank

GLENVIEW, Ill. – Nick Hardy, one of roughly a dozen players in the Evans Scholars Invitational presented by First Midwest Bank field with local ties, had no issues navigating the kind of chilly, windy morning one would experience at a Chicago Bears tailgate. New Yorker Cameron Young actually enjoyed his first four holes in the same conditions, because once he reached the fifth fairway, scattered rain showers blew in and turned Thursday afternoon into one of the most miserable golf rounds he ever endured.

Hardy and Young emerged from the wicked Chicago area weather with matching 7-under 64s, finishing the opening round with a one-stroke edge over Canadian Adam Svensson.

A native of Northbrook, Illinois, Hardy has a share of the 18-hole lead for the third time in 42 starts on the Korn Ferry Tour. Young sits atop the leaderboard for a fifth consecutive Korn Ferry Tour round, as he turned in a wire-to-wire victory (solo leader after every round) amid rainy conditions at last week’s AdventHealth Championship.

Hardy eagled his opening hole, the par-5 first, countered his only bogey of the day (a three-putt five on No. 3) with one of his six birdies the following hole, and snuck a 6-foot par putt in the side door at the par-5 18th to tie his lowest first-round score on the Korn Ferry Tour.

“It was a tough day. Everything is tough with that much wind,” Hardy said. “The greens are fast, so you’ve got to control your pace really well, and predict the wind well on putts. I was unhappy I blew it by about six feet and (had) a sidehill putt (on No. 18). I was definitely antsy to make that. I just took the absolute high line because I didn’t want to four-putt... tried to drip it in, and I hit a great putt. Luckily, it caught the right side of the hole and went in.

“That definitely helps going into a 24-hour break where you’re thinking about it. I was just relieved.”

Hardy also caught a break at the par-3 17th. As his tee ball sailed 25 yards left of his target and dangerously close to the water, Hardy just hoped for a kind bounce. The ball landed softly enough it hung up in the rough within the penalty area. Hardy took advantage of his good fortune, saving par there and narrowly avoiding a three-putt bogey at the 18th.

“I thought it was going to be okay when it was in the air, but I was sweating the bounce. If it got a bad bounce, it easily could’ve gone in the water,” Hardy said. “Saving that shot was huge. You have to finish that stuff off in the early rounds of the week if you want to put yourself in position Saturday and Sunday.”

A strong contingent of fans followed Hardy around The Glen Club. It was hardly a surprise given the fact Hardy played countless rounds at nearby Anetsberger Golf Course, a nine-hole par-3 course less than three miles from The Glen Club, throughout his childhood. Hardy is also very familiar with this week’s venue, having grown up five minutes from it; he played the course in multiple Illinois Open Championships as well.

Hardy starred at the University of Illinois, where he was a two-time All-American, the 2018 Big Ten Player of the Year, and a three-time All-Big Ten First Team selection. Hardy played alongside fellow Illinois alum Brian Campbell Thursday, and their gallery included Dylan Meyer, a former Fighting Illini teammate with status on the Forme Tour.

“There are a lot of people out here that mean a lot to me, that, growing up, helped me with my career,” Hardy said. “I want to play well in front of them, and it’s special to have this support. I just have to enjoy it as much as I can.”

Young’s bogey-free 64 marked his fifth consecutive round in the 60s, and second consecutive tournament-opening 64. Prior to last week, Young had 16 starts on the Korn Ferry Tour and never led after any of the 48 rounds he played.

“That’s how I’ve been as a player through my career. When it starts feeling good, I feel like it just keeps going,” said Young, who played collegiately at Wake Forest. “I’m very comfortable. I’ve made a few little changes with the putter... being more comfortable and happier on the greens has changed how I’m looking at each day, and it’s bleeding all the way through the bag.”

Once the showers rolled in, Young began his scoring run. After birdies at Nos. 5, 7, and 8, Young escaped wild drives at the ninth and 10th with a par and birdie, respectively. An 83-yard hole-out eagle at the par-4 13th took Young to 6-under, and an easy up and down for birdie at the par-5 18th, where he hit a 5-wood pin high and just left of the green from 258 yards out, capped the 7-under round.

“Frankly, one of the best rounds I’ve ever played in my life. Crowned with a hole-out on the back nine, where I was just trying to hang on,” Young said. “I like days like this. I’ve had some good battles, especially in the last few months, through some weather. My caddie and I were joking, we kind of thrived on it. We’re just out there doing the best we can not to care it’s raining on us, that we’re miserable, and that it’s cold. We’re just smiling through it, and it helps when things are going well.”

Friday's forecast currently calls for more rain and temperatures once again hovering around 50 degrees. Don't expect that to faze Young, who welcomed the impending weather conditions.

"At this point, bring it on."

Second-round tee times will run from 6:45 a.m. to 2:16 p.m. local time Friday off the first and 10th tees.

Thursday Notes

- Young projects to jump from 26th to 12th in the Korn Ferry Tour points standings with a win, while a win for Hardy projects to move him from 14th to fifth
 - While only seven 18-hole leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win this season, the last three Korn Ferry Tour tournaments were won by 18-hole leaders/co-leaders
- Hardy shares an 18-hole lead for the third time in 42 career starts on the Korn Ferry Tour
 - T1 with a 6-under 65 at 2020 Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship (finished T5)
 - T1 with a 6-under 64 at the 2021 Huntsville Championship (finished T7)
- While Hardy's 7-under 64 tied his lowest first-round score in 42 career starts on the Korn Ferry Tour, it is his lowest score to par in an opening round
 - Hardy's first-round 64s at the 2018 Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae and 2020 Huntsville Championship were both 6-under par rounds
- Young's 64 tied the third-lowest score of his Korn Ferry Tour career (17 starts); he has three rounds of 64 or better this month
 - Young shot an 8-under 64 in the first round of last week's AdventHealth Championship, and he carded a 7-under 63 in the third round (May 1) of the Huntsville Championship
 - Young's career-low round is a 10-under 61, which he shot in the third round of the 2020 Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron
- Young entered the 2020-21 season with zero status, but Monday qualified into the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna last July and posted four consecutive finishes of T11, T14, T6, T2 to earn Special Temporary Membership status
- **Vince India** (T5 / -4), a Chicago resident and Deerfield native who won the 2018 Illinois Open Championship at The Glen Club, is coming off a T6 finish – his first top-10 since August 2020 – at last week's AdventHealth Championship
- **Patrick Flavin** (T17 / -2), who won the 2017 Illinois Open Championship at The Glen Club as an amateur, has four missed cuts in five career Korn Ferry Tour starts; he made the weekend at the 2019 Lincoln Land Championship presented by LRS and finished T49
- **Adam Svensson** (3rd / -6) shot a 6-under 65 and broke 67 for the first time since a 7-under 63 in the second round of the Huntsville Championship (April 30)
 - Svensson won earlier this year at the Club Car Championship at The Landings Club
- Five bogey-free rounds were carded Thursday – Young (64), **Rodrigo Lee** (68), **Stuart Macdonald** (68), **T.J. Vogel** (68), **Chris Naegel** (69)
- Naegel and **Nathan Stamey** led the eight Monday qualifiers with matching 2-under 69s
- Weather: Scattered showers, windy (NE at 12-20 mph, gusts up to 30 mph), high of 58 degrees
- This week's purse is \$600,000 with \$108,000 going to the champion; the champion will also receive 500 Korn Ferry Tour points
- The Evans Scholars Invitational presented by First Midwest Bank is the 11th event of 2021 and the 34th 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

First-Round Course Statistics

- **Toughest Hole** – No. 17, Par 3, 204 yards (3.404 – four birdies, 44 bogeys, 11 double bogeys or worse)
- **Easiest Hole** – No. 1, Par 5, 559 yards (4.103 – four eagles, 80 birdies, four bogeys or worse)
- **Scoring Average (Front 9)** – 36.865
- **Scoring Average (Back 9)** – 35.609
- **Scoring Average (Total)** – 72.474