

Final-Round Notes – Sunday, May 2, 2021

Course Setup: Par 70 / 7,118 yards

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Paul Barjon*	65-67-64-69—265 (-15)
T2	Mito Pereira	69-65-65-66—265 (-15)
	Billy Kennerly	68-67-67-63—265 (-15)
4	Stephen Franken	67-67-68-64—266 (-14)
5	Davis Riley	68-66-66-67—267 (-13)

* Won with an eagle on the third playoff hole (No. 10)

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Paul Barjon battles back, eagles third playoff hole to win Huntsville Championship

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. – Paul Barjon never deviated from the plan.

Not after he double bogeyed the opening hole Sunday. Not after the three-stroke lead he carried into the final round of the Huntsville Championship turned into a four-stroke deficit at the turn. Not after his playing partner, Mito Pereira, hit an approach inside of eight feet on the 72nd hole and set up what could have been a tournament-winning birdie. Not even after Billy Kennerly did the same thing on the first hole of a three-man sudden-death playoff.

Barjon stayed the course, stayed patient. The Frenchman played his game, the one he rode to three victories on the Mackenzie Tour, as well as a trio of T2 finishes on the Korn Ferry Tour this season.

And when a defining moment arrived on the third playoff hole, from 210 yards out at the par-5 10th, Barjon struck. He knocked it stiff, buried the eagle putt and captured his first Korn Ferry Tour victory.

“It was definitely one of the best shots. I’ve hit some gimme birdies this week that were pretty nice, but at this time of the day to hit a 210-yard shot to 10 feet is definitely amazing,” Barjon said. “It’s been a close call the last two years. You have to get a little lucky. If you catch a bad break... if Billy (Kennerly) makes his first putt on the playoff hole, it’s over. It tilted my way there, and I made it happen.”

Early on, it looked as though Barjon would come up short again. His approach at the opening hole hit and rolled off the treacherous left side of the green and into the hazard. Barjon made his first double bogey of the week, bringing a multitude of players back into the title hunt.

Barjon bounced back with a birdie at the par-5 4th, but an eagle by Pereira left them tied at 13-under par. As Barjon played the last five holes of the front nine at 1-over par, Pereira made three birdies and built a three-stroke lead (and a four-stroke advantage over Barjon).

“Definitely a rough start. That’s not really what I was planning on,” Barjon said. “I was getting my ass kicked. I just tried to stick to what we said, with my caddie, keep the same clubs off the tee. I didn’t go overly aggressive with the tee shots and it paid off. We hit a couple good shots I actually thought were going to go in. I knew I had a chance still.”

Barjon left himself “gimme” birdies at Nos. 11 and 12. Then Pereira faltered.

As Pereira came back to the field with back-to-back bogeys, Barjon erased a bogey at the par-3 13th with birdies at Nos. 14 and 17, the second of which created a three-way tie for the lead at 15-under par.

Barjon and Pereira both had potential tournament-winning birdie putts miss by a fraction of an inch on the 72nd hole, setting up the playoff with Kennerly, who matched the low round of the tournament with a 7-under 63.

On the first hole of the playoff, Kennerly had the best look for a win. All three settled for par and headed back to the 18th tee. Barjon and Pereira scratched out pars the second time around, while Kennerly’s approach trickled off the back of the green and led to a bogey.

With the playoff down to two, Barjon was first to play from the 10th fairway. He delivered the shot of the tournament.

“It always feels good to win, no matter what Tour you play on,” Barjon said. “It sucks not to win. I would’ve been frustrated. It’s just little things. If you give yourself a putt to win, like on No. 10, eventually it’s going to go in.”

Paired with a quartet of top-three finishes, Barjon’s victory moves him from 15th to sixth in the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour points standings, almost assuredly securing his first PGA TOUR card.

With his first Korn Ferry Tour victory under his belt, though, Barjon already has a new plan.

“We’re all competitors, so you want to finish first at the end of the year,” Barjon said. “I want to finish first and get the best status you can get on the PGA TOUR. That’s going to be my goal now.”

There’s no need for Barjon to stay the course anymore. He’s in uncharted territory now.

Sunday Notes

- Barjon is the 16th player (in 30 events) to win after being a 54-hole leader/co-leader this season
- Barjon’s 23 birdies ranked second in the field, only behind **Joey Garber’s** 24
- University of Alabama alum **Davis Riley** (5th / -13) and **David Lipsky** (T21 / -6) are #TOURBound, as both eclipsed the 1,700-point threshold the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using as its fail-safe number for players to finish inside of the top 25
 - Riley and Lipsky are the fourth and fifth players to secure their PGA TOUR cards this season, joining **Stephan Jaeger**, **Will Zalatoris**, and **Taylor Pendrith**



- Zalatoris already has Special Temporary Membership status on the PGA TOUR, while Lipsky, Pendrith, and Riley will compete as rookies on TOUR beginning this fall, and Jaeger will begin his third TOUR season this fall
- Playing in a final pairing for the first time since the 2020 El Bosque Mexico Championship by INNOVA last March, **Mito Pereira** (T2 / -15) posted his first top-5 finish since opening 2020 with three in his first four starts, including a win at the Country Club de Bogota Championship
- **Billy Kennerly** (T2 / -15) posted his third top-5 finish in his six starts for the calendar year
- **Stephen Franken** (4th / -14) recorded the highest finish of his Korn Ferry Tour career (28 starts)
- **Bobby Bai** (6th / -12) recorded his first career top-10 in his 20th Korn Ferry Tour start
- **Andrew Novak** (T7 / -11) has top-10 finishes in each of the last four Korn Ferry Tour events
- **Brandon Wu** (T7 / -11) recorded his best finish of the calendar year and sixth top-10 of the season; he concluded 2020 with four top-10s in six starts, including a win at the Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance
- **Lee Hodges** (T46 / -2) closed the week with a bogey-free 5-under 65; Hodges was born in Huntsville, grew up in nearby Ardmore, and played at UAB and Alabama
- Sunday's bogey-free rounds were carded by Hodges, **Stuart Macdonald** (5-under 65), and **Charlie Saxon** (2-under 68)
- With top-25 finishes this week, Monday qualifiers Joseph Winslow (T16 / -7) and Sahith Theegala (T21 / -6) qualified for next week's Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation
- Weather: Cloudy with a high of 76 degrees and wind S/SE at 8-12 mph (gusts up to 16 mph)
- This week's purse is \$600,000 with \$108,000 going to the champion, **Paul Barjon**; he also receives 500 Korn Ferry Tour points
- The Huntsville Championship was the seventh event of 2021 and the 30th 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. 15, Par 4, 491 yards (4.375 – 2 birdies, 20 bogeys, 7 double bogeys or worse)
- **Easiest Hole** – No. 10, Par 5, 548 yards (4.629 – 0 eagles, 32 birdies, 6 bogeys)
- **Scoring Average (Front 9)** – 34.871
- **Scoring Average (Back 9)** – 34.457
- **Scoring Average (Total)** – 69.329

Cumulative Course Statistics

- **Toughest Hole** – No. 15, Par 4, 491 yards (4.392 – 25 birdies, 128 bogeys, 33 double bogeys or worse)
- **Easiest Hole** – No. 10, Par 5, 548 yards (4.453 – 22 eagles, 235 birdies, 31 bogeys or worse)
- **Scoring Average (Front 9)** – 35.012
- **Scoring Average (Back 9)** – 34.880
- **Scoring Average (Total)** – 69.892