

First-Round Notes – Thursday, August 12, 2021

Course Setup: The Club at Indian Creek – Par 71 / 7,581

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First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Andrew Novak	65 (-6)
T1	Davis Riley	65 (-6)
T1	Kevin Lucas	65 (-6)

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Andrew Novak, Davis Riley, Kevin Lucas share lead at Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna

OMAHA, Neb. – Andrew Novak, Davis Riley and Kevin Lucas each carded first-round 65s to share the lead after 18 holes at the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna.

The Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna is the 43rd and final event of the 2020-21 combined regular season. The top-25 players in the Korn Ferry Tour standings after this week's tournament will receive PGA TOUR membership for next season, while the top-75 will gain entry into the Korn Ferry Tour Finals over the next three weeks.

For Novak (15th) and Riley (seventh), the pressure is off this week as both players have locked up their first PGA TOUR card and will debut as rookies at the highest level this fall.

"It frees me up; I don't have the pressure," said Novak, a former Wofford College star. "I think it's a huge advantage. If there is a guy sitting at No. 26 right now, there is a lot more going on in his head than what I've got right now. Definitely an advantage for me, and something I'm trying to take advantage of."

Novak will join William McGirt as Wofford alums to reach the PGA TOUR after a season that has included one win and 10 top-10 finishes.

Riley, a University of Alabama product, has been waiting for this weekend ever since earning his second win of the season last summer, virtually guaranteeing him his PGA TOUR card via a ranking inside the top-25.

"Yeah it's been a long season I guess," laughed Riley, who at 24 years old will be one of the youngest members of The 25. "It's been 40+ events or whatever it was. It's been a long time coming and I feel my game is very prepared and I'm ready to go up there and see what I can do."

While Novak and Riley are already looking forward to Sunday night's PGA TOUR Card Ceremony, Kevin Lucas is in a much more desperate situation. The 32-year-old entered the week 166th in the Korn Ferry Tour points standings. Only a victory this week would allow Lucas to breach the top-75 in the standings in order for him to retain his Korn Ferry Tour membership for next season and earn a berth in the Korn Ferry Tour Finals.

"I love the pressure," said Lucas, a Scottsdale, Arizona resident. "It would be nice if the pressure was 26th on the points list, but the pressure is something that you don't get to this level or get to the next level without embracing it. For me, I like the pressure, I'm embracing it, and let's go out and play with your back against the wall. There's only one option because the other option is to fail. So I'm going to try my best to take the option of succeeding."

The trio leads Patrick Flavin and Ben Silverman by one stroke entering day two in the regular season finale. The second round will run from 7:05 a.m. to 2:47 p.m. off of the first and 10th tees at The Club at Indian Creek.

First-Round Notes

- Thursday's weather: Mostly sunny with a high of 90 degrees and wind N at 10-15 mph
- The Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna is the 43rd and final event of the 2020-21 combined regular season; each of Andrew Novak and Davis Riley would project to move inside the top-five with a win, while Kevin Lucas projects to move to 70th; just nine of 42 first-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win this season
- Several players sit squarely on the bubble of the top-25:
 - No. 23 (1,452 points) – Curtis Thompson (T16/-3)
 - No. 24 (1,422 points) – Taylor Montgomery (T145/+6)
 - No. 25 (1,412 points) – Peter Uihlein (T120/+3)
 - No. 26 (1,405 points) – Austin Smotherman (T87/+1)
 - No. 27 (1,404 points) – Roberto Diaz (T69/E)
- Former tournament champion Ben Kohles (2012) opened in 1-under 70 (T52); Kohles sits 21st in the points standings as he attempts to return to the PGA TOUR for the first time since the 2013 season
- Chicago product Patrick Flavin (-5, T4) would need a win to finish inside the top-75 and retain his Korn Ferry Tour status (and earn a berth in the Korn Ferry Tour Finals)
- Defending champion Seth Reeves was unable to attempt his title defense as he and his wife had their first child earlier this week
- Billy Kennerly (-4, T6) and Steve Lewton (-4, T6) were the only players to card bogey-free rounds
- This week's purse is \$750,000 with \$135,000 going to the champion; the champion will also receive 600 Korn Ferry Tour points
- Omaha native Brady Schnell leads the local contingent in the field at 3-under (T16)
- Chase Johnson carded his first ace on the Korn Ferry Tour at the par-3 17th with a 7-iron from 208 yards
- The combined 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour schedule is concluding this week with 25 PGA TOUR cards awarded to the top-25 in the points standings after the tournament with an additional 25 cards awarded at the conclusion of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Finals

First-Round Course Statistics

- Toughest Hole – Par-4 11th (4.442)

- Easiest Hole – Par-5 fourth (4.231)
- Scoring Average (Front 9) – 36.212
- Scoring Average (Back 9) – 35.128
- Scoring Average (Total) – 71.340