

First-Round Notes – Thursday, July 22, 2021

Course Setup: Highland Springs Country Club – Par 72 / 7,115

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First-Round Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Chase Johnson	63 (-9)
T1	Chip McDaniel	63 (-9)

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Chase Johnson, Chip McDaniel card 63s to co-lead at Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Chase Johnson and Chip McDaniel carded matching 63s to earn a share of the lead after the first round of the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper. The duo lead six players by one stroke entering the second round at Highland Springs Country Club.

The last time Johnson carded a 63, it was to rise to a runner-up finish during the final round at the 2020 TPC Colorado Championship at Heron Lakes, effectively launching his career on the Korn Ferry Tour.

Starting at the 10th, Johnson spread three birdies across his first eight holes, but hit the gas beginning at the par-5 18th. Johnson birdied six consecutive holes from Nos. 18-5 before closing with four pars for a 63.

“No. 11 was where I noticed the difference today,” reflected Johnson. “In previous starts when I would make a stupid mistake like that where you three-putt, I can normally feel the blood start to rush and get a little anxious. But I just kind of brushed it off. I did come in this week with the mindset to have more fun with it because you can’t play good golf if you’re stressed. That’s my mindset for the week, to enjoy it.”

Inside the top-10 in driving distance, Johnson’s length off the tee is consistently an advantage. But on Thursday, Johnson credited some early scrambling pars as the catalyst for his round.

“There was about a nine-footer for par on 14 that I made and a six-footer for par on 15 that I made,” said Johnson. “Those par putts on my first nine kicked the momentum forward and then I made about a 25-footer for birdie on 16 after I hit the pin and it ricocheted back about 25 feet away.”

While Johnson did his damage in the morning wave, McDaniel made his run late, competing in the penultimate tee time of the day.

“I put a new putter in the bag and made a 20-footer on the first hole for eagle,” laughed McDaniel. “That gave me some confidence and after that I just took it one shot at a time and tried to hit the center of the face...It was nice to see some go in.”

Both Johnson (102) and McDaniel (109) rank outside the top-100 in the season-long points standings with three tournament (including this one) remaining. The top-25 players in the standings earn PGA TOUR membership for the 2021-22 season, while the top-75 players retain their Korn Ferry Tour status in 2022.

“I definitely have to put the pedal down; it’s in the back of the mind for sure, but at this point I know what I have to do,” said McDaniel. “I just have to play really well. I have to get in contention and maybe close the deal. But it does me no good to put pressure on myself or think about it all the time. But it is in the back of my mind. It’s like Mike Miller said a couple of weeks ago, ‘You’re playing for your job.’ It’s nothing easy.”

McDaniel’s 63 also matches a career-best, tying an 8-under 63 in the second round of the 2021 Veritex Bank Championship.

Six players sit one stroke off the lead, including defending tournament champion Max McGreevy and Roberto Diaz, who broke through earlier this year with his first win at the 2021 Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS.

The second round will run from 7 a.m. to 2:26 p.m. off of the first and 10th tees at Highland Springs Country Club.

First-Round Notes

- Thursday’s weather: Partly cloudy with a high of 88 degrees and wind S at 5-10 mph
- The Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper is the 18th event of 2021 and the 41st (of 43) of the 2020-21 combined regular season; Johnson projects to move to 46th with a victory while McDaniel projects to move to 52nd; just eight of 40 first-round leaders/co-leaders have gone on to win this season
- Defending champion Max McGreevy opened with a 64 to sit T3 after the first round as he looks to become the first player in the Korn Ferry Tour’s 32-year history to successfully defend his title; five players have finished runner-up as they attempt to defend their title (most recent: Lanto Griffin/2018 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation)
- Roberto Diaz (-8, T3) is squarely on the bubble of the top 25 players in the regular season points standings with three events remaining; Diaz entered the week 23rd with 1,375 points
- With a two-way T3 or better, Seth Reeves (-7, T9) would pass the threshold of 1,650 points that the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using as its fail-safe number to guarantee a finish inside the top-25 at the conclusion and earn a PGA TOUR card
- Carr Vernon, an exemption from Poplar Bluff, Missouri (three hours away), opened with a 4-under 68 (T47)
- Kevin Roy (E, T119) aced the sixth hole with an 8-iron from 175 yards
- Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback and current NFL on CBS analyst Tony Romo carded an even-par 72 and sits T119 after the first round
- 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 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 – Par-4 14th (4.179)
- Easiest Hole – Par-5 11th (4.449)
- Scoring Average (Front 9) – 34.731
- Scoring Average (Back 9) – 34.686
- Scoring Average (Total) – 69.417