

Final-Round Notes – Sunday, June 6, 2021

Course Setup: Par 71 / 7,257 yards

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Mito Pereira*	62-67-67-67—263 (-21)
2	Stephan Jaeger	66-67-63-67—263 (-21)
T3	Stuart Macdonald	70-64-65-66—265 (-19)
	Taylor Moore	68-65-64-68—265 (-19)
5	Brandon Harkins	67-67-69-63—266 (-18)

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

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Mito Pereira wins playoff, secures PGA TOUR card at REX Hospital Open

RALEIGH, N.C. – Mito Pereira, who lost his Korn Ferry Tour card after a rocky 2018 season and clawed his way back up the professional ladder, secured his PGA TOUR card in thrilling fashion Sunday at the REX Hospital Open. A native of Santiago, Chile, Pereira birdied the first playoff hole to defeat Stephan Jaeger for his second victory of the 2020-21 season.

Pereira’s win vaulted him from No. 12 to No. 2 in the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour points standings, well over the 1,700-point threshold the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using as its fail-safe number for players to finish inside the top 25. Come August 15, the final day of the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna, Pereira will join Joaquin Niemann and Benjamin Alvarado as the only Chileans in history to earn a PGA TOUR card.

“Chile’s a small country. To have two Chileans on the PGA TOUR, the biggest tour, it’s something that maybe 10 years ago nobody thought about it,” said Pereira, who will join Niemann on TOUR this fall. “Right now, it’s real, and I want to thank all the guys in Chile, too, that have been really supportive to me. It’s a dream.”

Pereira and Jaeger both carded bogey-free 4-under 67s Sunday and finished with matching 21-under 263s, which tied the tournament’s 72-hole scoring record.

Pereira, who played one season of college golf at Texas Tech University, opened the tournament with a career-low 9-under 62, highlighted by a career-high 11 birdies, tied for the most in a Korn Ferry Tour round this season. He followed it with three consecutive 67s, with the vast majority of his second and third rounds (35 holes) coming Saturday.

Sunday afternoon, Pereira birdied Nos. 3, 8, and 10 – all par 4s – and headed to the par-5 15th locked in a tie with Jaeger, who was seeking his third win of the season for an immediate promotion to the PGA

TOUR. Both players made birdie there, and despite not gaining any ground, Pereira cited it as a key point in the day.

“I didn't hit a good drive,” Pereira said. “I ended up in the rough. Then I hit 5-iron, lay-up, then I hit a really good shot from 120 (yards), almost made it. That birdie was huge.”

Jaeger and Pereira missed quality birdie looks at the par-3 16th, escaped the par-4 17th – which played as the toughest hole all week – with fours, and headed to the par-4 18th two strokes clear of the field. Pereira followed a perfect tee shot with a wedge that spun back into the front fringe, while Jaeger drove well through the fairway, threaded a shot between two trees, and left himself with an incredibly challenging up and down from the bunker behind the green.

Pereira easily two-putted for par. Jaeger, a short game savant, had 15 feet left to keep his hopes of a three-win promotion alive. His putt caught the right third of the cup and fell in.

“One hundred people don't make up and down from back there,” Pereira said. “You just don't make par from there.”

The two headed back to the 18th tee for the playoff, and both left themselves comfortable distances into the green. Jaeger knocked his approach inside of 15 feet, only to have Pereira throw a dart inside of five feet from 110 yards out.

“I normally hit my 60 (degree wedge) like 105 (yards), but with this adrenaline, obviously it was the perfect club,” Pereira said. “I just wanted to hit a low one so it doesn't spin back, and it ended up being perfect.”

Jaeger's birdie putt slid by on the high side, and Pereira knocked his 4-footer right in the heart.

Pereira first earned Korn Ferry Tour status via a third-place finish in the 2016 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Order of Merit, largely off the strength of a win and two runner-ups. Pereira retained status for the 2018 Korn Ferry Tour season, but missed his final eight cuts and went on to finish 129th on the regular season points list, failed to earn his card back through Q School, and fell off his bicycle and suffered a broken collarbone back home in Chile. He went back to PGA TOUR Latinoamérica in 2019, finished 10th on the Order of Merit, and placed T41 at Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament's Final Stage, missing guaranteed starts by a single stroke.

Although Pereira's priority number was low, it got him into the 2020 County Club de Bogota Championship. He made a 20-foot eagle putt on the 72nd hole for his first win of what would eventually become the 2020-21 season.

“It feels like a long time from Colombia,” Pereira said. “I have more experience than in Colombia. I think losing the playoff in Huntsville (last month) gave me a lot of experience, too. Everything helps, and I hope I keep the momentum going. (In) 2018 I played really bad on this tour, lost my card, I got injured. Everybody has tough times, but I think the way you solve that, it's who you are, and that's the most important part.

“That's why I think I'm here and I'm heading to the PGA TOUR.”

Sunday Notes

- North Carolina State University alum and Raleigh resident **Stephen Franken** (T6 / -17) posted his third top-10 in his last five starts, and his T6 marks the second-highest finish of his Korn Ferry Tour career, only behind his solo fourth from the 2021 Huntsville Championship last month
- Raleigh native **Andrew Novak** (T9 / -16) played in the final group Sunday and shot a 1-over 72; he recorded his sixth top-10 in his last eight starts
- Cary native **Ben Kohles** (T15 / -14) posted a top-15 at the REX Hospital Open for the second time in his seventh start at the event
- **Taylor Moore** (T3 / -19) recorded his ninth consecutive top-25 – six of those nine are top-10s
- **Stuart Macdonald** (T3 / -19) logged a career-high finish in his 45th career start on the Korn Ferry Tour; he has three top-10s in his last four starts
- **Brandon Harkins** (5th / -18) logged his second top-five of the season and his first since the 2020 The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at Baha Mar last January
- A week after posting a career-high finish and the first top-10 of his career, **Taylor Dickson** (T6 / -17) logged a second consecutive top-10; he finished solo third at last week's Evans Scholars Invitational presented by First Midwest Bank
- Dickson and Harkins tied for Sunday's low round with matching 8-under 63s
- **Vince India** (T6 / -17) finished T6 for the second time in his last three starts and has three consecutive top-15s for the first time in his Korn Ferry Tour career
- **Cameron Young**, who became the 10th player in Korn Ferry Tour history to win back-to-back tournaments with wins in the two events leading into this week, finished T78 at 2-under par
- Campbell University's **Pontus Nyholm**, an amateur who received an exemption for winning the 2021 Stitch Intercollegiate, finished T72 at 4-under par in his first Korn Ferry Tour event
- There were 28 bogey-free rounds recorded in the first round, while only eight were posted in the second round, five were carded in the third round, and 14 were posted Sunday
- **Carson Young** (T66 / -5) was the only Monday qualifier who survived the 36-hole cut
- Weather: Partly cloudy, high of 88 degrees, wind S/SW at 3-10 mph
- This week's purse is \$650,000 with \$117,000 going to the champion, Mito Pereira; he will also receive 500 Korn Ferry Tour points
- The REX Hospital Open was the 12th event of 2021 and the 35th of the 2020-21 combined season
- The Korn Ferry Tour heads to the BMW Pro-Am Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation in Greer, South Carolina next week
- 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

Cumulative Course Statistic

- **Toughest Hole** – No. 17, Par 4, 480 yards (4.217 – 50 birdies, 109 bogeys, 20 double bogeys or worse)
- **Easiest Hole** – No. 4, Par 5, 587 yards (4.575 – 12 eagles, 212 birdies, 27 bogeys or worse)
- **Scoring Average (Front 9)** – 34.989 (-1.011)
- **Scoring Average (Back 9)** – 34.393 (-0.607)
- **Scoring Average (Total)** – 69.382 (-1.618)