



Sanford International

Minnehaha Country Club | Sioux Falls, South Dakota | September 17-19, 2021

First-Round Notes

Friday, September 17, 2021

Course Setup: Par 70 / 6,668 yards (R1: 68.704)

Weather: Sunny with highs in the low-70s and winds NNE at 5-10 mph

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	Player	To Par	Scores
T1.	K.J. Choi	-7	33-30 – 63
T1.	Darren Clarke	-7	31-32 – 63
T3.	Robert Karlsson	-6	32-32 – 64
T3.	Matt Gogel	-6	31-33 – 64
T3.	Rod Pampling	-6	32-32 – 64
T3.	Brandt Jobe	-6	32-32 – 64

Quick Links:

- [Leaderboard](#)
- [Second-Round Tee Times](#) (Golf Channel: 9:30-11:30 p.m. ET – Tape Delay)
- [PGATOURmedia.com](#) (transcripts and other resources available for download)

K.J. Choi, 33-30 – 63 (-7)

- After playing the first 10 holes in 1-under, Choi made four birdies and eagled No. 16 to shoot 6-under 30 on the back nine.
- In his bogey-free round, Choi hit 13 greens in regulation and was 5-for-5 in scrambling. He led the field in putts (25).
- Choi's 63 is the lowest round of his rookie season on PGA TOUR Champions (42 rounds).
- This matches the lowest first-round score in Sanford International history and is one stroke shy of the tournament's 18-hole scoring record (62; Darren Clarke, 2020; Scott Parel, 2020).
- This is the first time Choi has co-led after any round on PGA TOUR Champions. His previous best position on the leaderboard after any round was T3 on five different occasions.
- A win by Choi on Sunday would be the first victory on PGA TOUR Champions by a player from South Korea.

- With a win on Sunday, Choi would be the 11th different rookie to win on PGA TOUR Champions during the 2020-21 season (16th win by a rookie).
- With a win on Sunday, Choi would be the 13th first-time winner on PGA TOUR Champions during the 2020-21 season. The 12 first-time winners are the most in any single season in Champions Tour history.
- Choi's last win was at the 2012 CJ Invitational hosted by K.J. Choi on the Asian Tour. With a win on Sunday, Choi would snap a winless streak of eight years, 11 months and 15 days (or 3,272 days).
 - Choi's last win on the PGA TOUR was THE 2011 PLAYERS Championship. In all, Choi won eight times on the PGA TOUR.
- Making his 14th start on PGA TOUR Champions, Choi has four top-10s, including a T3 finish at the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship.

Darren Clarke, 31-32 – 63 (-7)

- Clarke birdied four holes on each nine to shoot 7-under 63.
- This matches his lowest first-round score on PGA TOUR Champions (2021 Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai).
- This is the third time Clarke has led/co-led after the first round on PGA TOUR Champions.
 - Led at the 2021 Regions Tradition (finished T8)
 - Co-led at The 2021 Senior Open Championship presented by Rolex (finished third)
- This is Clarke's second-lowest round at the Sanford International (10 rounds). He shares the 18-hole scoring record at this event (62, R2, 2020).
- Making his fourth appearance at the Sanford International, Clarke's best finish is T12 (2020).
- Making his 27th start this season, Clarke has two wins (2020 TimberTech Championship, 2021 Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai) as part of seven top-10 finishes.

Other Notes

- **Robert Karlsson**, who will serve as a vice captain for Team Europe at next week's Ryder Cup, shot 6-under 64 and sits T3.
- **Matt Gogel**, playing on a sponsor exemption, carded a bogey-free 6-under 64 for his lowest round on PGA TOUR Champions and sits T3.
- **Rod Pampling**, who won the Boeing Classic in August, is T3 after posting 6-under 64.
- **Brandt Jobe** birdied three of his last four holes en route to 6-under 64.
- **Steven Alker**, who has an active streak of three consecutive top-10 finishes to start his PGA TOUR Champions career, sits T7 after shooting 5-under 65.
- **Mario Tiziani**, playing on a sponsor exemption, eagled the par-5 fourth hole to fire 5-under 29 on the front nine. He is T7 after posting 65.
- Two players in this week's field have connections to South Dakota and here is their standing on the leaderboard after the first round:
 - **Tom Byrum** – T11 (66)
 - **Rich Beem** – T19 (67)
- **Jay Jurecic**, who left his job as a middle school math teacher this summer to pursue professional golf, shot 3-over 73 in the first round. Jurecic shot 61 at the open qualifier on Tuesday to take medalist honors.