

First-Round Notes – Thursday, May 19, 2022

Course Setup: Blue Hills Country Club (Par 72 / 7,364 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	MJ Daffue	65 (-7)
	Michael Feagles	65 (-7)
	Trevor Cone	65 (-7)
4	Taylor Montgomery	66 (-6)
5	Alexandre Rocha	67 (-5)

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- [Tournament Media Site](#) (interviews and other resources available for download)

Three players share 18-hole lead at AdventHealth Championship

KANSAS CITY, Missouri – A trio of players stood atop the leaderboard at 7-under par after the first round at the AdventHealth Championship. MJ Daffue, Michael Feagles and Trevor Cone all carded 7-under 65s to share the 18-hole lead at Blue Hills Country Club.

Daffue turned in a bogey-free card Thursday which consisted of seven birdies and 12 pars. The 33-year-old South African teed off from the 10th hole and tallied three consecutive birdies on Nos. 11-13 before adding another on the par-4 16th, putting him at 4-under par at the turn. Daffue added three more birdies at the first, seventh and eighth holes.

“I got lucky once or twice,” Daffue said following his opening round. “I hit one or two trees and it bounced me back in the fairway, but tomorrow it may bounce the other way. It just cancels out throughout the season and I'm just trying to be really grateful for being healthy and having a great family and great supporters and sponsors. I think my mind of gratitude is putting me in a good position to perform.”

Daffue turned professional out of Lamar University in 2012, but struggled to obtain status for the first seven years of his career. Daffue finished T138 at Final Stage of the 2017 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, leaving him buried in the priority ranking and for the 2018 season. His first Korn Ferry Tour start came in 2019 after he successfully Monday qualified. Daffue Monday qualified into five of his 10 career Korn Ferry Tour starts prior to the 2022 season, while another three were via top-25s following a successful Monday qualifier.

Daffue returned to Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament last November, but he finished T50 and missed the top 40 – which left him without guaranteed starts for the 2022 season – by a single stroke. After a battle with COVID in January, Daffue was the seventh-to-last player in the field at the season-opening The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, where he finished T15 and positioned himself to climb the priority ranking following the reshuffle.

In 11 starts this season, Daffue has four top-10s, including a T2 at the LECOM Suncoast Classic back in February and a solo third last week at the Visit Knoxville Open. Today's performance marked the second time that Daffue sits atop the leaderboard after the first round as he was the outright 18-hole leader at the Veritex Bank Championship in April following a 9-under 62, a career-low round.

"I've been playing pretty good the last few years and like I said before, I just needed to be able to have a season and schedule," Daffue said. "I'm just so grateful that I've only missed one cut, and I missed it by a shot too. I'm figuring it out as far as I go and just trusting in my ability to put the ball in the hole."

Feagles, who is in his rookie season on the Korn Ferry Tour, started his round with an eagle on the 540-yard par-5 first. Three additional birdies on the front (Nos. 4, 5, 9) countered by one bogey at the par-3 eighth equated to a 4-under 32 after nine holes played. His second and final bogey of the day came on the par-4 10th before Feagles added four more birdies (Nos. 11, 13, 15, 17).

"It's always great to start with an eagle," said Feagles. "To be 2-under through one is just a bonus, but this place, you've got to stay so patient out here. For me, it was, okay made eagle but the attention turned towards literally getting the ball in the fairway on two. So you've got to stay patient and even after eagling the first hole, I ended up doing that and it ended up being a good day in total.

It marked the first lead or co-lead of any kind on the Korn Ferry Tour for the 24-year-old. Last week at the Visit Knoxville Open, he came close to holding a share of the 18-hole lead, but sat in T2 position following a career-low round of 64, one stroke behind outright leader Anders Albertson who went on to win the event. Despite finishing T54 in Knoxville, Feagles credits his final-round 66 from last week as a momentum builder coming into Kansas City.

"I've kind of struggled this year. That's not any kind of secret," Feagles said. "So last week shooting 64 in the first round was really nice because it gave me a lot of confidence. When I get going, I can keep going. So to be able to do that and then back it up again this week – I built a lot of momentum last Sunday even though the two days in between didn't go the way I would've liked. The 66 on Sunday last week kind of propelled me to this week and I feel like my game's honestly trending in the right direction."

Feagles played collegiately at the University of Illinois, where he was a five-time All-Big Ten First Team selection and finished No. 7 in the inaugural PGA TOUR University Class of 2021. After turning professional, Feagles played on PGA TOUR Canada, where he recorded two top-10 finishes in eight starts. In the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, Feagles placed T5 at Final Stage and earned guaranteed starts for start of this season.

For Cone, this marks the first time he has sat atop the leaderboard after 18 holes played since he joined the Korn Ferry Tour in 2018. The last time he held a lead of any kind came in the 2018 Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae where he took the 54-hole solo lead and eventually won the event by a four-stroke lead, his only career Korn Ferry Tour victory.

Cone teed off from No. 10 Thursday and made the turn at 2-under following three birdies at Nos. 13, 16 and 17, and his lone bogey of the day at the 15th. The 29-year-old climbed the leaderboard on his second nine holes, playing bogey-free golf while racking up five birdies (Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9) to finish at 7-under par.

The Virginia Tech alum now has three consecutive rounds under 70 in this event, as he carded a 68 and 67 in the final two rounds of the 2021 AdventHealth Championship, where he eventually placed T15. In nine starts this season, Cone's best finish was a T45 in the opening event of the year, The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay.

Prior to joining the Korn Ferry Tour full time, Cone spent the 2016 and 2017 seasons competing on PGA TOUR Canada, where he made 23 starts and picked up 11 top 25-finishes.

Second-round tee times will from 6:45 a.m. through 2:11 p.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

First-Round Notes

- **MJ Daffue** (T1 / -7) has sat in the top five after 18 holes played in three events this season, most recently last week at the Visit Knoxville Open where he was T2
 - In 21 career Korn Ferry Tour events played, Daffue has four top-10 finishes, all four taking place this season: T2 at the LECOM Suncoast Classic, third at the Visit Knoxville Open, T4 at the Lake Charles Championship and T9 at the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard
- **Michael Feagles** (T1 / -7) is making his 13th start on the Korn Ferry Tour this week and in search of his first top-10 finish; best finish of the year was a T21 at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS
- **Trevor Cone** (T1 / -7) is making his 83rd start on the Korn Ferry Tour; his previous best position after 18 holes played was a T2 at the 2019 Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS
 - Cone is in search of his first top-10 finish since a T9 finish at the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard
- **Taylor Montgomery** (Solo fourth / -6) sits inside the top 10 after 18 holes for the fourth time this season; the 27-year-old has six top-25 finishes this year, including three in the top 10
- **Alexandre Rocha** (Solo fifth / -5) is making his 114th career start on the Korn Ferry Tour; marks the highest 18-hole position for Rocha since a T5 at the 2014 United Leasing & Finance Championship
- The AdventHealth Championship is the 13th of 23 regular season events on the 26-event 2022 Korn Ferry Tour schedule; the first set of 25 PGA TOUR cards will be awarded at the regular season finale, the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna (August 11-14), and an additional 25 TOUR cards will be awarded following the three-event Korn Ferry Tour Finals, which conclude with the Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance (September 1-4)
- This week's purse is \$750,000, with \$135,000 going to the champion; the champion will also receive 500 Korn Ferry Tour points
 - All 2022 Korn Ferry Tour regular season events feature a minimum purse of \$750,000, a 25 percent increase from last season, and will boast minimum purses of \$1 million in 2023 for a [total increase of 66.7 percent](#) from 2021 to 2022