

Final-Round Notes – Sunday, August 21, 2022

Course Setup: Hillcrest Country Club (Par 71 / 6,880 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Will Gordon *	67-66-67-63—263 (-21)
T2	MJ Daffue	69-66-63-65—263 (-21)
	Philip Knowles	61-64-68-70—263 (-21)
T4	Six Tied	264 (-20)

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

Quick Links

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

Will Gordon rallies for playoff victory at Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron

BOISE, Idaho – Given the low scores at the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron this week, it was only fitting the champion carded the low round of Sunday’s final round. Will Gordon carded an 8-under 63, a score only one other player in the field managed Sunday afternoon at Hillcrest Country Club, erasing a seven-stroke deficit to secure his first Korn Ferry Tour victory and a return to the PGA TOUR.

Gordon made an eagle at the par-5 second, a birdie at the par-4 third, and a run of five birdies in a row from Nos. 12-16 as he posted 63 around the time the final pairing made the turn. A native of Davidson, North Carolina, Gordon teed off one hour and 50 minutes before Philip Knowles, who held the outright lead through each of the first three rounds.

“I just went in the locker room and hung out,” Gordon said of the wait. “I called a couple buddies who had called me and just talked to them. When somebody bogeyed No. 18 and Phil [Knowles three-putted for par at] No. 15, I was like, ‘Better go hit some balls.’ I was honestly just hoping I had a chance. I would say it went well into my mentality the whole year: I’m going to control what I can control, and what I could control during that time was trying to conserve energy, keep a positive mindset and be ready if the opportunity came.”

With Gordon in the clubhouse atop the leaderboard, MJ Daffue, who already earned his first PGA TOUR card via the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season, birdied Nos. 16 and 17 and matched him at 21-under par. Knowles retook the outright lead at 22-under par twice on the back nine, first with a birdie at the par-4 12th, and again with a birdie at the par-5 16th. However, a bogey at the par-4 14th, a three-putt par at the drivable par-4 15th, and a failed up-and-down attempt from just off back of the 18th green left Knowles tied with Gordon and Daffue.

All three returned to the par-4 18th for a sudden-death playoff. Gordon was the only member of the trio who clubbed down and hit 2-iron off the tee. He was also the only one who made par.

Gordon flew his approach near the back hole location, but watched helplessly as it spun backwards and rolled downhill all the way to the front of the green. Before Daffue and Knowles played challenging shots from off the back of the green, Gordon lagged a birdie putt within 2 feet of the cup.

Daffue drove a putter through an awkward lie in the rough and left himself a par putt similar to the birdie attempt Gordon had only moments prior. Knowles, perhaps still influenced by what happened from a similar spot in regulation, left his birdie putt from the fringe well short and above the hole. Knowles' slick par putt slid past the hole, leaving Gordon with little more than a tap-in par for the win.

"It just happened so fast," Gordon said.

Gordon grew up in Davidson, North Carolina and starred at Vanderbilt University, where he was named 2019 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year and an All-America First Team selection as a senior.

Gordon earned medalist honors at 2019 PGA TOUR Canada Q-School's Santee, California site amid his senior season at Vanderbilt, awarding him fully exempt status on the circuit for the summer. Gordon posted two top-10s in nine starts on PGA TOUR Canada. Later that fall, Gordon finished two strokes off the cut line for Korn Ferry Tour membership at Second Stage of the Qualifying Tournament.

With his upward climb to the PGA TOUR at somewhat of a standstill, Gordon extended his 2019 season with sponsor exemptions into three fall TOUR events. The third exemption resulted in a T10 at The RSM Classic, giving him a chance to chase Special Temporary Membership early in 2020. Gordon played the Farmers Insurance Open as a sponsor exemption in January and open qualified into Puerto Rico Open in February, posting top-25s in both starts. Four months later at the Travelers Championship, the third PGA TOUR event following the COVID-19 pandemic hiatus, Gordon finished T3 as a sponsor exemption and secured Special Temporary Membership.

By the end of the 2019-20 season, Gordon earned enough non-member FedExCup points to secure membership for 2020-21 via the Top 125 Non-Member category, meaning had Gordon been a full member he would have qualified for the FedExCup Playoffs.

Despite a full schedule of 31 events in 2020-21, Gordon finished No. 159 in the FedExCup Standings, relegating him to the Korn Ferry Tour Finals. Three missed cuts sent him to Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament last November, where he finished T19 and earned guaranteed starts for the first eight events of 2022.

"The whole year, I wasn't in a great place," Gordon said. "Last year toward the end of the year, I was injured, I had a lot going on, and this whole year I just kind of looked at it as a growth process. Things just really haven't gone my way when it's come down the stretch. I'm just happy it worked out my way."

Prior to this week, Gordon's rookie season on the Korn Ferry Tour featured five top-10s, all of which were finishes of T6 or higher. In the two events leading up to this week's Albertsons Boise Open, Gordon recorded back-to-back T5s, moving him up to No. 33 on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Eligibility Points List.

"I would say since January my game's been good," Gordon said. "I've just been doing the little things a little better. I've been leaving the ball on the correct side of the hole and I've been a lot more patient with myself. You keep believing, you keep believing. Until you see results, it's hard. I've seen results for the last month and it's been really rewarding.

"I've been on the PGA TOUR, I got there quickly, I lost my card," Gordon continued. "I've seen both sides of it, so understanding it's not life and death has helped me a lot this year, because it felt like life and death last year. Going through all the different processes of this profession, (if) I go out and just play free... over time it's going to pay off."

Gordon is not the only one headed to the PGA TOUR. While Knowles settled for a T2 finish, he secured another one of the PGA TOUR cards available via The Finals 25, as the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using 220 points (the equivalent of a solo-fifth finish) as a fail-safe threshold for players to finish within The Finals 25. Knowles will be a rookie on TOUR this fall.

The three-event Korn Ferry Tour Finals continue with the Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship Thursday, August 25 at the Ohio State University Golf Club's Scarlet Course in Columbus, Ohio.

Final-Round Notes

- **Will Gordon** (1st / -21) recorded the largest final-round comeback victory since Seth Reeves came from eight strokes back and won the 2020 Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna
- Gordon is the 15th first-time winner and eighth rookie winner on the Korn Ferry Tour this season
- Gordon and **Erik Barnes** (T4 / -20) shared the low round of the day with 8-under 63s
- The Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron was the first tournament of 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 was \$1,000,000, with \$180,000 going to the champion, **Will Gordon**; he also earned 1,000 Korn Ferry Tour points