

**First-Round Transcripts | Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard
Thursday, February 10, 2022**

Ryan McCormick (-9, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Middletown, New Jersey | Turned Pro: 2014 | College: St. Johns University
Exempt Status: Top 75 in 2020-21 Regular Season Standings (thru 2022)

On his 9-under 61 today...

“Putted well today. You have to take advantage of the conditions. Probably the first time I’ve been first out in the morning, so nice to have the greens without anybody stepping on them. They rolled pretty good this morning, and I was able to get the ball rolling nicely on the greens.”

On the early part of his round when he made four birdies and a bogey his first five holes...

“Came out of the gates pretty hot. Just a lackadaisical three-putt on No. 11. Made some nice 15-footers on No. 13 and No. 14. It was nice to get the ball rolling in the hole early, see that the rest of the round. Got some momentum going with the putter.”

On playing alongside Trevor Werbylo, who also shot a 9-under 61...

“Trevor is a great player. It was fun that he was playing well early and we fed off each other a little bit. To be honest with you, I had no idea where he stood. I just knew we were both playing well. Certainly always nice when another guy in the group is taking it low as well.”

On dealing with the conditions in Bogota and playing different courses on different days...

“I actually hadn’t played all the holes on this course. We got rained out of the pro-am yesterday in the afternoon, so I’d probably only seen four or five holes. I’ve always loved playing at altitude. Who doesn’t love to see the ball go far, right? It’s a lot of fun. I relied on my caddie a little bit today, let him guide me around the golf course, and it worked out well.”

On whether his caddie is local...

“Nope. We’ve been going since last year. He’s been on the bag for a while.”

On the strategy for tomorrow...

“The other course is where we are going to be playing the next three rounds, and it’s quite a bit longer. Fortunately, I have played a couple practice rounds on that course, so I’m a little more comfortable over there. Looking forward to the challenge. I think it’ll be great.”

On the biggest challenge of these courses...

“You have to figure out how much percentage off you’re playing. I don’t know many guys who’ve played at 8,300 feet before. I certainly haven’t. It’s an adjustment. With it being soft, some of the pin locations you have to be a little careful. The defense of the course is how tight it is, and tree-lined. Growing up in the northeast, I saw a lot of courses like this. Feels like home to me.”

On if he’s comfortable in a low-scoring shootout, or whether he would like it to be more difficult...

“I just play the course the way it is. I would play on the clay tennis courts over there with a hole in it if that’s the course we were playing. It doesn’t matter to me. I certainly have thought I’ve played well either way.”

Trevor Werbylo (-9, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Tucson, Arizona | Turned Pro: 2021 | College: University of Arizona
Exempt Status: 2021 Forme Tour Order of Merit Winner

On the 9-under 61 to start the tournament...

"It was a good way to start. We played the shorter course today, and it was definitely gettable. There are going to be some low scores with how soft it is. I just played solid, didn't make many mistakes, made a few nice putts. Everything felt good off the tee, in my iron game, and I was putting it well, too. Good start."

On the highlight from his round...

"I made a nice long putt on No. 17, which was our eighth hole of the day. That was a good putt. That's the only one that comes to mind."

On whether he expected to start this well since it's his first time in Colombia...

"I was playing well in the practice rounds, hitting it well. I knew playing today, the shorter course, you're going to have to shoot a good score to keep pace with some of the guys. I felt good about my game and was confident. First time in Colombia, and I'm enjoying it so far."

On his goals for the season...

"Try to get my PGA TOUR card. It's a long season. Hopefully, can play well this week and keep it going throughout the year."

On the strategy for tomorrow...

"Tomorrow we will play the longer course, and it will definitely play tougher. But it's still soft out there. You can take it pretty low. Just staying aggressive. Not much changes. Same mindset."

On his father...

"I think he will (caddie) for some of the Louisiana ones. He will start traveling once we are back in the (United) States. That will be fun."

On if he's comfortable in a low-scoring shootout, or whether he would like it to be more difficult...

"It depends, really. I've played well on courses where you've got to go low, but I probably prefer it playing a little tougher. You shoot 3- or 4-under today, you're probably losing ground, at least on the course we played. It depends, but I feel comfortable having to go low to win a golf tournament."

Matt McCarty (-5, T2)

City Plays From: Scottsdale, Arizona | Turned Pro: 2021 | College: Santa Clara University
Exempt Status: Qualifying Tournament Finishers 11-40 and Ties (thru 2022)

On his performance today after finishing with a bogey-free 5-under 65...

It was a fun day. I hit the ball well. I kind of had a lot of looks at birdies. Just didn't really get anything to go early but then made a few putts and just kind of kept it rolling.

On making the cut in each of the past two tournaments and starting strong today...

I'm feeling really good. I gained a lot of confidence birdying two of my last three at Final Stage, so just kind of rolling off that and I've been playing well. Good first couple events and just trying to keep it going.

On how the Forme Tour prepared him for the Korn Ferry Tour...

I think it just kind of got my feet wet. I played with some of these guys that are out here now. Everything's a learning experience so it kind of got me started which was good.

On if this is his first time in Panama...

Yes, it is.

On how he likes the course and Panama City overall...

The course is good. The city is beautiful. We've been kind of exploring around the last couple days and it's really nice and we've been to some great spots and met some cool people.

On if the course fits any part of his game in particular...

No, I think you just have to hit the ball well. Some of these greens are kind of firm, so just kind of a ball striker's course. If you can be in the fairway, you definitely have a better chance. I drove it really well today which was nice. Just try to do the same the next few days.

On what his favorite movie is...

I don't know, I like a lot of the Avengers movies. I don't know. Off the top of my head, I don't really have anything right now but yeah, I like watching movies for sure.