

### First-Round Notes – Friday, November 4, 2022

**Course Setup:** The Landings Club - Marshwood (Par 71 / 7,000 yards) and Magnolia (Par 71 / 6,954)

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#### Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Alan Wagner	63 (-8)
T2	Daniel Summerhays	65 (-6)
	Chris Gotterup	65 (-6)
	Tim Widing	65 (-6)
T5	Six Tied	66 (-5)

#### Quick Links

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

### Alan Wagner jumps out to two-stroke lead, Chris Gotterup in mix at Final Stage of Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament

**SAVANNAH, Georgia** – Alan Wagner, a 33-year-old Argentinian who turned professional in 2007 and played the vast majority of his career on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica up to this point, carded a bogey-free 8-under 63 on The Landings Golf & Athletic Club’s Marshwood course. Wagner’s opening round put him two strokes ahead of a trio of players at 6-under par at Final Stage of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament.

Wagner birdied three of the first five holes and added another at the par-3 eighth to turn at 4-under par. On the back nine, Wagner birdied a pair of par-4s (Nos. 15 and 17) and eagled the par-5 15th, knocking an 8-iron out of a divot from 188 yards away to within 6 feet of the hole.

“I felt really, really good today,” Wagner said. “It’s not easy to start Q-School. Too many nerves sometimes. Very happy with this beginning.”

Wagner knows quite a bit about Q-School nerves, with he himself estimating he’s been through “10 or 12” PGA TOUR and Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournaments. Wagner’s first attempt was as an 18-year-old in 2007, back when this event was known as PGA TOUR Q-School and determined status for both the TOUR and Korn Ferry Tour. Wagner also tried a couple European Q-Schools through the years.

This marks Wagner’s second trip to Final Stage of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, having previously qualified in 2019. Wagner made it through Second Stage on the cut line, but finished T126 at Final Stage, which left him buried in the priority ranking for the 2020-21 season. Wagner did not make a Korn Ferry Tour start in either 2020 or 2021, electing instead to play PGA TOUR Latinoamérica.

“Here is the revenge,” Wagner said in reference to his poor showing three years ago. “It’s been a crazy journey. I turned pro when I was 18. Fifteen years, doing this all over the world, hopefully I can finish well this week and finally get my Korn Ferry (Tour) status. Everything would be easy that way.”

This season, Wagner finished No. 6 in PGA TOUR Latinoamérica’s Totalplay Cup, largely off the strength of a victory at the Scotia Wealth Management Chile Open presented by Volvo in December 2021. It was the second PGA TOUR-sanctioned victory of his career and first since 2012, his first season on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica.

The top-10 finish in the Totalplay Cup ranking earned him an exemption to Final Stage of this year’s Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament.

“It was a huge prize for me to end up directly here,” Wagner said. “Now I have to do my work here and, hopefully, be playing (Korn Ferry Tour) next year.”

Wagner previously lived in Jacksonville, Florida, rooming with fellow Argentinian Tano Goya, who earned his first PGA TOUR card via the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Finals. Wagner relocated to Mexico last year, but should things continue to go well this week, he will likely reunite with Goya in Jacksonville, where they can play and practice together at TPC Sawgrass.

“We are really, really good friends,” Wagner. “And it’s also an example for me. I will try to do the same. I see the whole process, and then it works, so in my head, I know what I have to do. So I will do it.”

The trio of players at T2 and two strokes behind Wagner includes Chris Gotterup, who finished No. 7 in the PGA TOUR University presented by Velocity Global Class of 2022 and parlayed strong finishes as a PGA TOUR sponsor exemption into enough non-member FedExCup points for a Korn Ferry Tour Finals berth. Although Gotterup did not earn a PGA TOUR card or fully exempt status on the Korn Ferry Tour this season, the trip to Finals earned him an exemption for Final Stage this week.

Gotterup, a longtime New Jersey resident, played his first four collegiate seasons close to home at Rutgers University, where he was the 2019-20 Big Ten Conference Player of the Year. Gotterup graduated and transferred to University of Oklahoma for the 2021-22 season, which saw him earn two of the three national player of the year awards (Haskins and Jack Nicklaus Awards).

Joe Highsmith, who finished No. 10 in the PGA TOUR University Class of 2022, carded the lowest round of the day on the Magnolia course, a bogey-free 5-under 66. Highsmith played four seasons at Pepperdine University, helping the Waves win the 2021 NCAA Championships with a 3-0 record in match play.

Highsmith turned professional out of Pepperdine in June and joined PGA TOUR Canada by virtue of his PGA TOUR University finish. The Lakewood, Washington native finished T2 in his professional debut and rattled off four more top-10s en route to a No. 9 finish in the Fortinet Cup, earning him an exemption to Final Stage this week.

One of the more unique and peculiar stories Friday involved a Chipotle cup, a trip going up a flight of stairs, and skin glue.

Charles Wang, a 25-year-old native of Beijing, China, made the cut on the number at First Stage and was only one stroke clear of the cut line at Second Stage en route to his first Final Stage berth since 2015.

Wang, who played one season at Northwestern University (2014-15), celebrated the accomplishment back in 2015 by going skydiving. Shortly after the jump, Wang finished T21 at Final Stage for guaranteed starts in 2016.

Wang made just six Korn Ferry Tour starts in 2016, however, missing four cuts and finishing no better than T59 to shuffle down the priority ranking and out of position for starts. Wang turned in unremarkable seasons on PGA TOUR Canada in 2018, 2019, and 2022 before his second successful navigation of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament this fall.

Two days after qualifying for Final Stage this time around (less than two weeks ago), Wang tripped as he walked up the stairs on the way to his apartment. With a Chipotle cup in his right hand, Wang extended his left hand to take the brunt of the fall.

“I tried to save my face and hit the edge of the stairs, and cut it (left thumb) right open,” Wang said. “Right away, I went to the ER, and the doctor didn’t recommend stitches. I got skin glue, which stopped the bleeding.”

The gash left Wang scrambling ahead of Final Stage this week. With positioning in the priority ranking for the 2023 season at stake, Wang exhausted every possible measure to ensure he could play. He experimented with different grips, different tapes. Wang even considered withdrawing in the middle of the first round in the leadup to teeing off Friday, which would leave him at the bottom of the priority ranking but still with conditional membership for the upcoming season.

“I was preparing for the worst-case scenario coming into this week,” Wang said. “I was supposed to check out (of the hotel) today. I called my caddie who caddied for me at Second Stage and I canceled him, because I didn’t want to have him driving all the way up from Florida, a seven-hour drive, and just me hitting one tee shot. I just didn’t know. Even this morning, I didn’t know.

“I was struggling a little bit on the driving range,” Wang continued. “I was hitting one handed, tried to eliminate my left thumb. I tried to grip it like a baseball grip and I was chunking the ball. I was doing all sorts of things. Playing with my tape, different kinds of tape... the moment I walked to the golf course, I had my glove on, never took it off. That gave me the best-case scenario to play, being consistent with tape and everything.”

Using his traditional grip, Wang carded a 1-over 72 on the Magnolia course, which played nearly 1.5 strokes over par (for comparison, Marshwood played roughly one stroke under par).

“I’m more than happy the way it turned out,” said Wang, who stands T84. “I hadn’t touched a golf club for almost 10 days. I was trying to heal my thumb right to the last minute. I tried not to take a practice swing, because whenever I take it back, the thumb holds the pressure on the grip. I (did) it with no practice swing, step up, see the shot, and then try to hit it.”

Second-round tee times will from 8:30 a.m. through 10:42 a.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

### First-Round Notes

- Of the 22 lowest scores relative to par Friday, 18 came from Marshwood, with the exceptions being **Joe Highsmith** (T5 / -5), **Brandon McIver** (T11 / -4), **Jared Sawada** (T11 / -4) and **Ben Kohles** (T11 / -4)
- Nine bogey-free rounds were carded Friday, seven of which were posted on Marshwood
  - Highsmith and Sawada were the only two players with bogey-free rounds on Magnolia
- **Chris Gotterup** (T2 / -6) tied his career-low round with a 6-under 65
  - The only other time Gotterup opened a tournament with a 65 was at the 2022 John Deere Classic four months ago, where he eventually finished T4, his highest finish in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event
- **Tim Widing** (T2 / -6) made seven birdies against his one bogey en route to a 6-under 65
  - One year ago, Widing opened the PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Qualifying Tournament with a 65 and eventually finished T2
- Making his third consecutive appearance at Final Stage, **Daniel Summerhays** (T2 / -6) stands T2, his highest 18-hole position in a Korn Ferry Tour event since the 2009 Moonah Classic, when he stood T1 after the first round (finished T4)
- **Charles Porter** (T23 / -3 on Marshwood) and **Frankie Capan III** (T33 / -2 on Marshwood) led the eight players who made it through all stages of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, beginning with pre-qualifying
- The Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament's Final Stage determines which players will earn guaranteed starts for the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season
  - The medalist (and ties) receives fully exempt status for 2023
  - Finishers 2-10 (and ties) are guaranteed entry into the first 12 events of the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season
  - Finishers 11-40 (and ties) are guaranteed entry into the first eight events of the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season
  - Remainder of the field receives conditional status for 2023
- [Livestreaming](#) will be available for Monday's final round via the NBC Sports App and GolfChannel.com

### First-Round Course Statistics - Marshwood

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 71): 69.932 [-1.068]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 36): 35.095 [-0.905]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 35): 34.838 [-0.62]
- Toughest Hole: No. 13, Par 4, 511 yards – 4.595 [+0.595]
- Easiest Hole: No. 15, Par 5, 523 yards – 4.432 [-0.568]

### First-Round Course Statistics - Magnolia

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 71): 72.472 [+1.472]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 35): 35.694 [+0.694]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 36): 36.778 [+0.778]
- Toughest Hole: No. 6, Par 4, 492 yards – 4.542 [+0.542]
- Easiest Hole: No. 1, Par 4, 349 yards – 3.764 [-0.236]