

Third-Round Notes – Saturday, July 16, 2022

Course Setup: Panther Creek Country Club (Par 71 / 7,228 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Rob Oppenheim	64-68-60—192 (-21)
	Austin Eckroat	65-63-64—192 (-21)
T3	Paul Haley II	65-67-61—193 (-20)
	Augusto Nunez	66-66-61—193 (-20)
	Patrick Newcomb	65-64-64—193 (-20)

Quick Links

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

Rob Oppenheim and Austin Eckroat share 54-hole lead at Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Through 54 holes, two players are tied atop the leaderboard at the Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS, as Rob Oppenheim and Austin Eckroat enter Sunday’s final round as co-leaders at 21-under. Eckroat began the day with the outright 54-hole lead and carded a 7-under 64 Saturday, while Oppenheim recorded an 11-under 60 to set a new career-low round and tie Panther Creek Country Club’s course record. The co-leaders sit one shot ahead of a trio of players at 20-under – Paul Haley II, Augusto Nunez and Patrick Newcomb.

Oppenheim entered the day T6 and opened with a bogey on the par-4 first hole, but was able to post birdies on Nos. 3, 6 and 7. After making the turn at 2-under, the 42-year-old caught fire on the back, shooting a 9-under 27 on the final nine holes. Oppenheim needed just three shots on each hole of the back nine, a stretch that included five par-4s, two par-5s and two par-3s. It marked the first 27 on any nine in a Korn Ferry Tour event since Alex Prugh in the 2018 Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae.

“In competition, I would go as far to say that’s the best nine holes I ever played, for sure,” Oppenheim said following his third round. “I realized after I made an eagle on 16 that I made all threes. Then I had a par-3, and actually probably my best par of the day was on 17. I hit it really way right, hit a good flop shot to about 10 feet, made that for par. Then 18, walking down with my caddie in the middle of the fairway like, ‘Hey, we’ve got eight in a row, let’s try to get nine.’ I think that almost helped me just to kind of keep that motivation, keep the pedal down and was able to make a putt.”

Oppenheim’s third-round 60 tied the course record, which was previously set last year by Taylor Moore, who went on to win the event and eventually earn his first-ever PGA TOUR card by finishing No. 6 on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List. Additionally, Oppenheim topped his previous career-low

round of 61, which he had posted twice before, most recently in the third round of the 2019 Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron.

“You don't get these days very often where the hole looks big,” said Oppenheim. “I got some good breaks and took advantage of them, made some putts and hit some good shots. Conditions were perfect for scoring. Everything lined up and it was good to take advantage of it.”

For Oppenheim, who is making his 224th start on the Korn Ferry Tour this week in Springfield, Illinois, it marks the second time of his career where he holds at least a share of the lead heading into the final round. He also was a co-leader at the 2017 Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank, but finished T2 after a 2-under during the final round.

Oppenheim has played in all but one event this season, recording six top-25s, including three top-10 finishes, in 18 starts. He entered the week ranked No. 36 on the Points List, and with a win this week, he would surpass the 875-point threshold the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using as its fail-safe threshold for players to finish inside The 25 and earn a PGA TOUR card at regular season's end.

“There's still one more day,” Oppenheim reminded the media after his impressive third round. “It was a great day, but I know I need to play really well tomorrow. That's the most important thing is to finish up well tomorrow.”

The average score in the third round was 67.35, with players averaging 3.65 under par. Three players in the field carded rounds of 10-under or better – Oppenheim, along with Haley II and Nunez, who tallied matching 10-under 61s. Eckroat, who was playing in the final group following opening rounds of 65 and a career-low 63, rose to the occasion with a 7-under 64 on Saturday but was surprised to find himself tied atop the leaderboard entering Sunday's final round.

“I mean, if people would have told me I'd shoot 7-under today and was tied for the lead instead of having the individual lead, I wouldn't have believed you,” said Eckroat, [who was the 36-hole outright leader](#). “It was crazy, scoring today was unbelievable.”

Similar to Oppenheim, Eckroat's day was a tale of two nines. The 23-year-old native of Edmond, Oklahoma carded a bogey-free round, but lost the lead in the afternoon after posting pars on each of the first nine holes. He turned it on in a hurry after the turn by carding six consecutive birdies on Nos. 10-15, before adding his seventh and final birdie of the day at the par-3 17th.

“I really wasn't playing good on the front nine, my short game was saving me,” Eckroat said. “Then the back nine, something clicked. Started hitting it close. I was putting it good because I was making the par putts and then I just started to give myself birdie putts and they started going in. I thought I was going to birdie them all, but seven on the back nine's a lot.”

It marked the 27th consecutive round of par-or-better for Eckroat, dating back to the NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank in May. Despite having six top-25 finishes in his last seven starts, Eckroat began the season with conditional status and only appeared in two of the first 12 events. Now sitting as the co-leader entering the final round, he took a moment Saturday to draw back on his season up to this point.

“It feels like a year ago. It seems like a different lifetime,” Eckroat said regarding the start of his season. “Yeah, like you said though, I was walking back to Q-School, I was in a really bad spot, status-wise. I've got a good opportunity to jump ahead of that now.

“I haven't been in contention as a pro yet, it's going to be fun. Glad with how I bounced back today, kind of had the nerves at the beginning, and hopefully that leads into tomorrow.”

Final-round tee times will run from 8:00 a.m. through 10:10 a.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

Third-Round Notes

- **Augusto Nunez** (T3 / -20) sits inside the top-5 after 54 holes for the fourth time this season; in the previous three instances, Nunez recorded two T3 finishes and a solo-sixth; Nunez has recorded just one bogey through three rounds, tied with **Kevin Dougherty** (T12 / -15; one double bogey) for the fewest bogey-or-worse holes this week
 - Nunez is ranked 11th on the Korn Ferry Tour regular season Points List and needs to finish solo-54th, 4-way T53 or higher to surpass the 875-point threshold the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using as its fail-safe threshold for players to finish inside The 25 and become #TOURBound, earning a PGA TOUR card at regular season's end; it would mark Nunez' first career PGA TOUR card
- **Patrick Newcomb** (T3 / -20) shot a second-consecutive 7-under 64 and sits inside the top-10 entering the final round for the first time this season and second time of his career
- **Paul Haley II** (T3 / -20) carded a 10-under 61 Saturday, marking a new career low round in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event
 - Haley II is ranked 14th on the Korn Ferry Tour regular season Points List and needs to finish solo-14th, 3-way T13 or higher to surpass the 875-point mark the Korn Ferry Tour is using as its fail-safe threshold to reach #TOURBound status
 - Haley played bogey-free golf Saturday and tallied eight birdies, as well as a hole-out eagle on the par-4 18th
- **Cody Gribble** (T8 / -17) carded a 9-under 62 Saturday, tying his previous career low round which he set in the 2015 Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron
 - Gribble recorded a five-stroke swing in a two-hole stretch in the third round, eagling the 414-yard par-4 15th before carding an albatross on the 506-yard par-5 16th, the first double eagle of his career
- **Cole Hammer** (7th / -18) is making his third start of the Korn Ferry Tour this season and sits inside the top-10 for the first time; he shot a career low round of 63 in the second round and followed it up with a 7-under 64 Saturday; Hammer claimed the No. 5 ranking in the PGA TOUR University Class of 2022
- The Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS is the 20th 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

Third-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total – Par 71): 67.350 [-3.650]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 35): 34.138 [-0.863]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 36): 33.213 [-2.788]
- Toughest Hole: No. 7, Par 4, 369 yards – 4.088 [+0.088]
- Easiest Hole: No. 16, Par 5, 506 yards – 4.138 [-0.863]