

**First-Round Transcripts | NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank
Thursday, May 26, 2022**

MICHAEL KIM (-8, Leader)

City Plays From: Dallas, Texas | Turned Pro: 2013 | College: California-Berkeley

Exempt Status: Former Fully Exempt PGA TOUR Member for at least five consecutive seasons

On having the solo 18-hole lead

Everything was really working well for me. I got off to an awesome start, five birdies in a row. I hadn't done that in a while. I just kept hitting the right shots, kept hitting fairways and greens and just rolled a bunch of putts in.

On his five birdies to start the round

Starting on 10, it's a pretty simple hole. It was a three-wood and a little chip lob wedge. I made a nice little 10-footer. Eleven was probably the most unexpected one. I made probably a 40-footer or something like that. Just kind of got the ball rolling and kept hitting some really good drives and really good iron shots and making some putts.

On where his golf game is at now

I've been telling my caddie and my team, my coach, that I've been trending. I got a new swing coach, Sean Foley, at the end of last year. It's been great what we've been working on and it's clearly working.

On why he feels comfortable on this course

I was talking to the pro-am partners yesterday that I've played in, I think, four Western Amateurs which are all in the Chicago area. I haven't been here in a few years but I had some good vibes and good memories coming in so I'm looking to continue the trend.

On having his support system here this week

My girlfriend's here. She got in Monday and so did I. It's nice not to think too much about the golf course and just spend time with her off the course.

NICK HARDY (-7, T2)

City Plays From: Northbrook, Illinois | Turned Pro: 2021 | College: Illinois
Exempt Status: PGA TOUR: Top 50 from 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour (thru 2021-22)

On getting off to a good start today

Yeah, especially today. I knew I had to get off to a good start. Tomorrow's going to be a north wind and it's going to be a lot trickier than today. Playing catch-up with a little more difficult conditions tomorrow is tougher.

On the course conditions and key holes

Today was a little warm morning, a little breezy to start. I made a bogey on 13 today, my fourth hole of the day. Missed the green with a wedge, 118 yards missed the green. But I kept my composure and hit a great 5-iron the next hole to make par on 14. Then I got up and down on 15 for birdie and that kind of started my run. I'm just happy with how level headed I was out there and how focused I was out there. After a long layoff like that, it can be tough to stay sharp mentally, but I was sharp out there.

On returning from a wrist injury

It was more minor last year. This year, it was a different injury but the same wrist. I basically partially dislocated a tendon and I had to wait for it to heal so three or four weeks of just ice and compression. So I didn't get to do much the last month or so, but I started hitting balls a few days ago and it feels good, so I'm going to keep on hopefully feeling good.

On his wrist affecting play recently

Not at all. I feel like my game was pretty good. I just haven't had the best year. The last 365 days just haven't been my best golf. I don't feel like I'm playing that poorly and I know I'm not hitting my standard out there, but I know I'm close. Sometimes it's just a game. You go through peaks and valleys. I feel like I was becoming a better player even though I wasn't seeing the results and hopefully that shows soon.

On playing well but not seeing results

On the PGA TOUR, you can play well and miss the cut. That's just the reality of it. I definitely had a couple tournaments where I did that but I also had tournaments where I didn't play well. Just wasn't really playing as well as I could, obviously. I don't really see it as a struggle, I think it's just been a lot of growing pains, a lot like my 2019 season where I had no status. Just a lot of learning. I think it's good though.

On playing in this tournament

When I got hurt, I was circling this. I know I'm not going to get into Schwab, so I know if I could play at home, that'd be awesome. I was hopeful the whole time while I was rehabbing to be back here. It was kind of nice. I knew from the time I got hurt that the doctor said I'd be out a month so I targeted this the whole time and I kind of knew I'd be playing here from the start.

On playing in a Korn Ferry Tour event at home

I feel fresh. I feel ready. I've been out a month, so it's certainly nice getting to come back home for that restart. It's just good feelings all around, good vibes. I'm seeing a lot of people I haven't seen in awhile. It's just good to be home.

STEPHEN FRANKEN (-7, T2)

City Plays From: Raleigh, North Carolina | Turned Pro: 2019 | College: North Carolina State
Exempt Status: Top 75 in 2020-21 Regular Season Standings (thru 2022)

On his bogey-free first round

It was a great day. It was the first day all season that I felt like things were clicking and I had control of my game. I've been working really hard on my game all year and it's just been a real terrible year so far. I finally felt this week like I'd worked really hard on a lot of the things I needed to work on. I just really feel comfortable in what I'm doing now and I feel like my game's in a really good spot to content on a regular basis for the rest of the year.

On what he improved to bounce back this week

My ball striking just needed a lot of work. I'm starting to hit the shots that I see and then getting it into position to make putts for birdie as opposed to par really. Just hitting a lot of greens now. It felt good today.

On the course conditions and being thankful to have a morning tee time

Yeah, definitely a relief with the morning tee time. It looks like a good draw. The course was playing pretty gettable I felt like. Greens are pretty receptive. There are a couple wedges on that back nine so you can kind of get it going. I felt like I played the front better. It's playing well, it's going to be a good week for scoring both ways. It'll be fun.

On his strongest start of the season

I had a great week off last week. I just feel comfortable. I'm staying with family this week. I don't know, I feel very refreshed this week and very content in my circumstances for one of the first times all year. I just feel very free to go play, compete and contend. Thankful to have a good first day. There's a lot of work left for the rest of the week, but I'm excited to be in a good spot after one day.

On staying with his family this week

I'm staying with my aunt and they live about 20 minutes away. My wife's coming in tomorrow. It's a fun week. A lot of people are coming out to support, so very thankful for a lot of things this week.

On playing with family here

It's funny, because I've played pretty much every year in Chicago and I've always played terrible. So this is the first week that I've gotten off to a good start. It's comfortable. I feel very relaxed and I'm just excited to be playing and competing and feeling like my game's in a spot where I can play golf instead of hoping I play golf.