

Third-Round Notes – Saturday, February 5, 2022

Course Setup: Panama Golf Club – Par 70 / 7,325 yards

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Andrew Kozan	68-68-67—203 (-7)
	Zack Fischer	65-70-68—203 (-7)
	Ben Taylor	68-67-68—203 (-7)
	Jimmy Stanger	64-69-70—203 (-7)
T5	Four Tied	204 (-6)

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

Four players share 54-hole lead, four others one stroke behind at The Panamá Championship

PANAMA CITY, Panama – Zack Fischer, Andrew Kozan, Jimmy Stanger, and Ben Taylor are tied atop the leaderboard at 7-under par after three rounds of The Panamá Championship. Kozan entered the third round in T15 position and made the biggest jump among the 54-hole co-leaders Saturday, overcoming a bogey and double bogey in windy conditions en route to a 3-under 67.

Kozan’s newfound co-leader status was a product of six birdies Saturday, tied for the most by any player in the third round. The West Palm Beach, Florida native’s 67 also equaled the lowest round of the day as Panama Golf Club, four times the No. 1 toughest course on the Korn Ferry Tour (2004, 2008, 2009, 2019) in terms of scoring average relative to par, showed its teeth once again to the tune of a 2-over 72 scoring average.

After Kozan opened the round back-to-back birdies, he added to the hot start with another birdie at the par-3 sixth. However, Kozan’s 3-under-par stretch hit an emphatic backslide with a double bogey at the par-4 seventh, followed by a bogey at the par-4 ninth. Kozan rebounded with consecutive birdies at the par-4 10th and 11th, as well as his sixth and final birdie of the day at the par-4 15th.

“Today with all the wind – I think it was blowing 20-25 (miles per hour) out there – the greens got super firm, super fast, and made it really tough,” Kozan said. “All these tough pins, really close to the edges, you have to give yourself chances when you can and take advantage of it when they come. Had a little hiccup on No. 7. I knew it was playing tough out there and everyone would have the same mistakes.”

This week marks the third career Korn Ferry Tour start for Kozan, who graduated from Auburn University last May, played the 2021 U.S. Open as an amateur, and turned professional prior to the Korn

Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament. Kozan was a medalist at First Stage's West Palm Beach, Florida site, made it through Second Stage [on the number](#), and earned guaranteed starts for the first 12 events of the 2022 season with a T2 at Final Stage.

Fischer is in his fifth season on the Korn Ferry Tour and making his 95th start, but this marks his first co-lead of any kind on Tour. Like Kozan, Fischer poured in six birdies Saturday, countering four bogeys for a 2-under 68. The 32-year-old Texan officially snapped a streak of six consecutive missed cuts on the Korn Ferry Tour this week. The streak dated back to the 2017 season.

"Guys have been saying it's basically our version of (the) U.S. Open, because it's playing so fast and firm," Fischer said. "I love Panama. Going to enjoy the warmth because it's freezing back home. Ice storm. Right now it's just brutal. I'm not hating the fact I'm down here."

Fischer earned medalist honors at the 2013 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament for fully exempt status in 2014, playing full-time on the Korn Ferry Tour through the end of the 2017 season, after which he lost status until November 2021, when he [became the first two-time medalist](#) in the modern era of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament.

While Fischer will be chasing his first Korn Ferry Tour win, back home in Texarkana, Texas, his wife, Kaitlin, recently scored a thrilling victory of her own.

"She passed her court reporter test, so she is officially a court reporter, and I'm incredibly proud of her," Fischer said. "Our little girl (Hallie) is starting to say phrases, which is a lot of fun. And I hate being away, but if I win it would be a lot sweeter for sure."

Stanger, the [solo leader after the first round](#), shot an even-par 70 and earned a share of the 54-hole lead for the first time in his 86 career Korn Ferry Tour starts. Stanger went without a par for the first five holes of his third round, sandwiching three birdies between a pair of bogeys. Following another bogey at the par-4 seventh, Stanger closed with 11 consecutive pars.

While Stanger, a fourth-year Korn Ferry Tour member, finished in the top 75 of the 2019 and 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points Standings to maintain fully exempt status, the University of Virginia alum continues to chase his first victory. The Tampa, Florida native's highest finish to this point was at the 2020 NV5 Invitational presented by First Midwest Bank, where he shared T2 with 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour graduate Will Zalatoris and finished one stroke behind the champion and eventual 2020-21 graduate, Curtis Thompson.

"Just excited to see what the competition brings out of me," Stanger said of the impending final round. "Whatever happens, it's going to teach me a lot about what's inside of me, what my golf swing does, the putts I can hit under pressure, and I'm going to be able to learn and adjust from that. I would love to win it tomorrow but, no matter what, I'm excited because I know I'm going to learn something that's going to be incredibly valuable."

Taylor shot a 2-under 68, including a bogey-free final eight holes which featured birdies at the par-4 14th and 18th. A native of Epsom, England who plays from London, Taylor holds a share of the 54-hole lead for the third time in his Korn Ferry Tour career. Both of his previous 54-hole leads came in this stretch of the Korn Ferry Tour schedule – the 2018 Asatara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard (next week's event) and 2019 The Panama Championship.

Taylor, who graduated to the PGA TOUR via the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Finals, converted the three-stroke 54-hole lead in Colombia into a six-stroke victory for his first Korn Ferry Tour win.

Final-round tee times will run in pairs from 7:20 a.m. through 12:40 p.m. off the first tee.

Third-Round Notes

- Zero bogey-free rounds were recorded Saturday, compared to five in the second round and three in the first round
- **Zack Fischer** (T1 / -7) has a field-leading 18 birdies this week, three more than any other player
- Fischer is seeking his first Korn Ferry Tour victory; his career-high finishes are currently a solo third at the 2016 WinCo Foods Portland Open and T3 at the 2015 Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank
- **Andrew Kozan** (T1 / -7) and **Theo Humphrey** (T14 / -3) carded the lowest rounds of the day with matching 3-under 67s
- Kozan and **Taylor Montgomery** (T9 / -5) are the only players positioned higher than T25 with two or more double bogeys this week; they have two double bogeys apiece
 - Montgomery, the outright 36-hole leader, played 42 consecutive holes bogey-free prior to consecutive double bogeys at the par-4 10th and 11th; he birdied the par-4 16th and carded a 3-over 73 Saturday
- Prior to this week, **Jimmy Stanger's** (T1 / -5) career-high 54-hole position at a Korn Ferry Tour event was T2 at the 2019 LECOM Suncoast Classic, where he finished T3
- **T.J. Vogel** (T9 / -5) did not make a bogey across his first 46 holes this week, but made three in his final eight holes of the third round
- Montgomery (one bogey and two double bogeys) and Vogel (three bogeys) have the fewest over-par holes among all players in the field this week; the player with the next-fewest is **Ben Taylor** (T1 / -7), who has four bogeys
- **Brandon Matthews** (T5 / -6), winner of the 2020-21 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Order of Merit, is making his 49th Korn Ferry Tour start and is in his career-best 54-hole position; his career-high position through three rounds of a Korn Ferry Tour event prior to Saturday was T9 at the 2018 United Leasing & Finance Championship
 - Matthews previously had Korn Ferry Tour membership in 2018 and 2019, making 21 starts apiece in those two seasons
- **Julián Etulain** (T5 / -6), a native of Buenos Aires Argentina, sits T5 through three rounds for the second consecutive event; he stood T5 through 54 holes and finished T7 at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic a little over a week ago
- **Brett White** (T5 / -6) is making his third Korn Ferry Tour start and the 13th PGA TOUR-sanctioned start of his career (three on Korn Ferry Tour this year, seven on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica in 2017, three on PGA TOUR Canada – one each in 2016, 2018, 2019); he finished T45 in his Korn Ferry Tour debut at The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, and missed the cut at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club
 - White spent three weeks in the hospital with viral encephalitis in the middle of 2017; he was unable to play for an entire year, and was confined to a wheelchair following his hospital stay and underwent 10 weeks of physical therapy to learn to walk again; he won the 2019 Nevada Open two years after his original diagnosis, and the Grand Rapids, Michigan native won the 2020 Michigan Open as well

- The 36-hole cut was made at even par, with 65 players surviving the cut; the two players who finished the last hole of their second round Saturday – **Sam Stevens** (T55 / +4) and **Tain Lee** (T63 / +6) – both made pars and made the cut on the number
- **Quade Cummins** (T14 / -3) paced the two Monday qualifiers who survived the 36-hole cut; he played collegiately at University of Oklahoma and finished No. 6 in the inaugural PGA TOUR University presented by Velocity Global Class of 2021
- The Panama Championship is the third 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 2023