

First-Round Notes – Friday, July 21, 2022

Course Setup: Highland Springs Country Club (Par 72 / 7,115 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	David Kocher	63 (-9)
	Taylor Montgomery	63 (-9)
	Peter Kuest	63 (-9)
T4	Five players tied	65 (-7)

Quick Links

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

Three players share 18-hole lead at Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper

SPRINGFIELD, Missouri – Following a warm afternoon where temperatures eclipsed triple digits, three players – David Kocher, Taylor Montgomery and Peter Kuest – are tied atop the leaderboard at 9-under after the first round of the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper. The three co-leaders enter the second round two shots ahead of a group of five players tied at 7-under.

Kocher's day started on the back at Highland Springs Country Club where he opened birdie-par-par before his only bogey of the day on the par-3 13th. He added another birdie at the par-3 15th before entering a stretch that propelled him up the leaderboard. Kocher birdied seven consecutive holes from Nos. 17-5, which consisted of four par 4s, two par 5s and a par 3. He tallied one more birdie on No. 9, his final hole of the day, to earn his first lead of any kind this season.

"When I started getting past five birdies, I was kind of like, 'okay, this is pretty cool,'" said Kocher. "I don't know if I've made six birdies in a row before, so then I made the sixth and then I made the seventh, and I was like, 'woah'. I had like a 12-footer for birdie on the sixth hole and ended up missing that putt. When I got up to nine green, I had like a four- or five-footer for birdie. I kind of thought about it for a second, but I just wanted to make it and get the round over with."

It marks just the second time that Kocher has sat atop a Korn Ferry Tour leaderboard, the first time since he claimed his maiden victory at the 2020 El Bosque Mexico Championship by INNOVA. In that event, Kocher erased a five-stroke deficit during the final round to enter a playoff with Chad Ramey and Paul Barjon, which he won on the first sudden-death hole.

Kocher, who is in his second season on the Korn Ferry Tour, has tallied three top-25 finishes in 19 starts this season, highlighted by a T21 at the Lake Charles Championship. The 26-year-old University of

Maryland alum entered this week No. 114 on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List and is looking to capitalize on the first 18-hole lead or co-lead of his career.

"I feel like I've been trending the last few weeks and I just haven't been getting a lot out of my game on the weekends," said Kocher. "Obviously this was a good first round, but I just want to play good the next few days and build on this."

Montgomery got off to strong start Thursday, opening with an eagle on the par-5 first followed by a birdie on the par-4 second. The 27-year-old native of Las Vegas, Nevada rolled in three more birdies on the front nine at Nos. 5, 7 and 8 to make the turn at 6-under. On the back, Montgomery tallied four more birdies at the 11th, 13th, 15th and 18th, countered by just one bogey at the par-4 14th.

"I got off to a good start. I hit a 4-iron to about three, three-and-a-half feet (on No. 1)," said Montgomery. "I made eagle on the first after not playing competitive golf for a while it feels like. It kind of was just a blur from there."

Montgomery is making his 14th start of the season and sits inside the top-10 after 18 holes for the sixth time this year. With five top-10 finishes already, including a solo-second at the AdventHealth Championship, Montgomery entered this week No. 14 on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List. A year after finishing 26th in both the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season and Korn Ferry Tour Finals Points Standings, Montgomery only needs to finish in a two-way T33 or higher this week to lock up his first career PGA TOUR card.

"Yeah, it's definitely a lot different. Last year, I wasn't hitting my irons very good so that's what made it so frustrating," Montgomery said when comparing his game now to what it was a year ago. "I don't care what tour you're on, if you're not a good iron player, you're going to get lapped. This year's been a lot different. I've hit a lot of good iron shots when I needed to and that's been the big difference between last year and this year."

Kuest, a rookie on the Korn Ferry Tour, recorded a new career-low round and clinched his first lead of any kind on Tour. One of 14 players to card a bogey-free round Thursday, Kuest started with a birdie on the par-5 first but it was a three-hole stretch on Nos. 6-8 that helped him climb the leaderboard. The 24-year-old birdied the par-3 sixth and par-4 seventh before eagling the par-5 eighth, placing him at 5-under par at the turn. On the back, Kuest added four more birdies (Nos. 11-13 and 17) to finish at 63, topping his previous low round of 65 from last month's BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by TD SYNEX.

"The game plan was to hit fairways and greens, see how many putts we can make. We went out and did that pretty good so we'll try and do it again tomorrow," said Kuest. "I hit a lot of really good shots and gave myself a lot of good looks. Just managed expectations and kept firing away."

Kuest, who turned professional in 2020 after playing four years at Brigham Young University, began this season with conditional status after placing T63 in last year's Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament. He earned his way into the field this week by Monday qualifying, something that Kuest has become accustomed to this season.

"I've kind of been in that same boat for the whole year pretty much," said Kuest. "I've been lucky enough to get in on my number in a good amount of them. But yeah, Mondays are tough, and play better."

Despite holding a share of the lead for the first time in his young career, Kuest remained even-keeled after his opening round, reminding himself that there is plenty of golf left to be played before a winner is declared Sunday afternoon.

“I mean, it's Thursday,” said Kuest. “We've got three more rounds to go so I'll manage expectations a little bit and go from there. You just have to keep hitting good shots and making putts. You know the guys are going to go low so you just try to match it.”

Second-round tee times will run from 6:55 a.m. through 2:42 p.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

First-Round Notes

- Fourteen players carded bogey-free rounds Thursday, including **Kevin Yu** (T4 / -7), **Matt McCarty** (T4 / -7), **Justin Suh** (T4 / -7) and **Harry Hall** (T4 / -7)
- **Kevin Yu** (T4 / -7), who is in his second season on the Korn Ferry Tour, needs to finish in solo-second or better to surpass 875 points this season and clinch a PGA TOUR card for the 2022-23 season
- **Harry Hall** (T4 / -7) sits No. 16 on the Points List and can clinch #TOURBound status by finishing in a two-way T7 or higher this week
- **Justin Suh** (T4 / -7) entered this week No. 20 on the Points List and needs a solo-fourth finish or higher to secure his first PGA TOUR card
- The Price Cutter Charity Championship is the 21st 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

First-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total – Par 71): 68.542 [-2.458]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 35): 34.523 [-0.477]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 36): 34.019 [-1.981]
- Toughest Hole: No. 14, Par 4, 427 yards – 4.199 [+0.199]
- Easiest Hole: No. 11, Par 5, 535 yards – 4.333 [-0.667]