

First-Round Notes – Sunday, January 23, 2022

Course Setup: The Abaco Club on Winding Bay – Par 72 / 7,141 yards

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Dawson Armstrong	65 (-7)
	Corey Shaun	65 (-7)
	Alvaro Ortiz	-7 (15*)
T4	Julián Etulain	66 (-6)
	Jeremy Paul	66 (-6)
	Davis Thompson	-6 (17)

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Three players share lead at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club

GREAT ABACO, The Bahamas – Despite only two starts on the Korn Ferry Tour, Corey Shaun is already accustomed to the view atop the leaderboard, while Dawson Armstrong earned his first look from above since a playoff 11 months ago, as the two opened The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club with 7-under 65s for a shared lead.

Alvaro Ortiz also reached 7-under par, but still had three holes remaining when play was suspended due to darkness at 5:53 p.m. Ortiz was one of 18 players with holes remaining in their first round.

Armstrong and Shaun each made eight birdies against one bogey, which came at the notoriously difficult par-4 ninth for both of them. Had either made par, they would have tied The Abaco Club on Winding Bay's course record established by Vince Covello in the second round of the 2017 The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club.

"Being here at The Abaco Club is absolutely incredible," Armstrong said. "The experience is not just about the golf. It takes your mind off golf and gives you a lot of perspective. Every single day, I've been in the water. This fits my personality. This is a perfect place for me to kick back, not have as much of a stressful week, and just go out there and enjoy it.

"This is one of the greatest places in the world."

Armstrong grew up in Brentwood, Tennessee and played collegiately at nearby Lipscomb University. In four seasons at Lipscomb, Armstrong set school records for career wins (10), career scoring average

(71.2), single-season scoring average (70.26), and was a three-time ASUN Conference Player of the Year (2016-18).

Just weeks before the start of Armstrong's sophomore season, he won the 2015 Western Amateur, holing a 20-yard bunker shot for a playoff victory over future PGA TOUR winner Aaron Wise.

"It feels like it was a lifetime ago. I say that, and I'm only 26 years old," Armstrong said. "That was one of the best moments I've had in my golf career. My dad on the bag... when you're in the moment, you don't appreciate some of the things you're doing. When you look back, you start to have a different perspective. I'm really grateful for that."

At the tail end of his senior season, Armstrong received a sponsor exemption for the 2018 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation. At the time, the Korn Ferry Tour held the event at Lipscomb's home course. Despite the fact it conflicted with the NCAA Regional Championship (Armstrong qualified as an individual), he [accepted the invitation](#), turned professional, and finished T30 in his debut start.

"I thought about that two or three nights ago, when (2021 NCAA Championships individual medalist) Turk (Pettit) was being interviewed," Armstrong said. "If my team had made it, I definitely would have played. Since it was just me and I felt I represented Lipscomb in a fairly good manner, I was able to go out with my head held high."

Armstrong played the remainder of 2018 on PGA TOUR Canada, and earned his first victory the following year. It was one of three top-10s Armstrong recorded, which left him eighth in the 2019 PGA TOUR Canada Order of Merit. Armstrong then secured guaranteed Korn Ferry Tour starts for what became the 2020-21 season with a T7 at the Final Stage of the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament.

As a rookie last season, Armstrong logged four top-10s, all of which came in a eight-event stretch spanning the final five of 2020 and first three of 2021.

A 4-under 67 in the final round of the 2021 LECOM Suncoast Classic lifted Armstrong into a playoff with Hayden Buckley and Taylor Montgomery. Buckley emerged victorious and went on to earn a PGA TOUR card via the Korn Ferry Tour Finals, while Armstrong hit a slump shortly thereafter and finished 54th in the Regular Season Points Standings.

"I just couldn't hit the ball well," Armstrong said of his struggles last year. "It's really hard to play a lot of good golf when you're in the rough all day, or worse. Putting for par isn't fun. I feel like I'm working on the right things now. It's not as much a mental learning process for me the last year as much as a physical process, learning how to get my game to a manageable state and letting the putter work its magic."

Shaun held the [solo 54-hole lead](#) at last week's The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, his first career start on the Korn Ferry Tour. The 25-year-old UCLA alum shot an even-par 72 in the final round and ultimately settled for a T3.

"I definitely felt like I wanted to keep playing, get another round in, play a different golf course, and just restart a bit," Shaun said. "Even though I had a good week last week, I wish the last day went a little differently."

Shaun's early success on the Korn Ferry Tour is an extension of his late-season success on the Forme Tour. The Encinitas, California resident parlayed a sponsor exemption into a T31 and an improved priority number, won the 2021 Forme Open at TPC River's Bend two starts later, and followed it up with a solo second and T4 for a runner-up finish in the Order of Merit – which earned him Korn Ferry Tour membership.

"I'm just trying to play the golf course and see what kind of scores I can shoot," Shaun said. "It seems like my good golf has been pretty good relative to a lot of the field as well. I'm pretty happy about that."

The first round will resume at 7:30 a.m. ET, while second-round tee times will remain the same and run from 6:55 a.m. through 1:35 p.m. ET off the first and 10th tees.

First-Round Notes

- **Alvaro Ortiz** (T1 / -7) is the younger brother of PGA TOUR winner Carlos Ortiz; he is playing via a sponsor exemption this week, as he finished T115 at the Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, leaving him with conditional status
- Ortiz finished fourth in the 2020-21 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Order of Merit, with the highlight of his season being a win at the 61st Abierto Mexicano de Golf in March 2021
- **Dawson Armstrong's** (T1 / -7) previous career-high 18-hole position on the Korn Ferry Tour was T4 at the 2021 Club Car Championship at The Landings Club
- Should Armstrong remain inside the top 10 at the end of the first round, it would be the fourth time he finished the opening round inside the top 10 in his 47th start on the Korn Ferry Tour
 - 2021 Club Car Championship at The Landings Club – T4 (finished T7)
 - 2020 Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper – T5 (finished T38)
 - 2020 Country Club de Bogota Championship – T8 (finished T45)
- **Julián Etulain** (T4 / -6) won the 2018 Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS, and his 6-under 66 marks his lowest round on the Korn Ferry Tour since a 7-under 63 at the 2021 Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics last June
- **Jeremy Paul** (T4 / -6) finished T11 at Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, earning guaranteed starts in the first eight events of the season; he last played the Korn Ferry Tour in 2017, his first year out of the University of Colorado, making four of 12 cuts and posting a high finish of T27 at the Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics
- **Davis Thompson** (T4 / -6) finished on the number for guaranteed starts at Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament (T39); he is making his third career Korn Ferry Tour start, as he debuted at the 2021 Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper via a No. 2 finish in the inaugural PGA TOUR University Class of 2021
- Thompson is a former No. 1 player in the World Amateur Golf Ranking
- The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club is the second 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
- Weather: Partly cloudy, high of 75 degrees, wind N/NE at 5-12 mph