

Second-Round Notes – Monday, January 24, 2022

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

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Alvaro Ortiz	65-67—132 (-12)
T2	Brandon Harkins	69-65—134 (-10)
	Davis Thompson	65-69—134 (-10)
T4	Vincent Norrman	66-69—135 (-9)
	Dawson Armstrong	65-70—135 (-9)
	Zecheng Dou	69-66—135 (-9)
	Alexandre Rocha	68-67—135 (-9)

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Alvaro Ortiz takes two-stroke lead at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club

GREAT ABACO, The Bahamas – Patience is the name of the game for Alvaro Ortiz.

A 26-year-old native of Guadalajara, Mexico, Ortiz already speaks and plays with the wisdom and tranquility of veteran professionals, despite this only being his second full season among their ranks. Ortiz's composure paved the way to a two-stroke lead Monday at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club, as he concluded a suspended first round with three consecutive pars for a 7-under 65 and followed it up with a 5-under 67.

While Ortiz's ball striking was in tremendous form early on, his putter was less cooperative. Ortiz played his first nine holes of the day (three to end the first round, six to begin the second) at 1-over par. He finally broke through with a birdie at the par-4 seventh, and backed it up immediately with another at the par-5 eighth.

His confidence restored, Ortiz played the final five holes at 4-under par, highlighted by an 82-yard hole-out eagle with a 58-degree wedge at the par-4 16th.

"It landed pin high, spun a little, and went in perfectly," said Ortiz, younger brother to Carlos, champion of the 2020 Hewlett Packard Enterprise Houston Open on the PGA TOUR.

Back in the summer of 2018, Ortiz exercised a different kind of patience.

Coming out of the University of Arkansas, where he was an All-Southeastern Conference Second Team selection as a senior, Ortiz delayed turning professional. Instead, he played a number of amateur events, including the 2018 Arnold Palmer Cup and World Amateur Team Championship. Pebble Beach Golf Links hosted the 2018 U.S. Amateur, so Ortiz ventured there as well, qualifying for match play before falling to Cole Hammer, a future No. 1 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking.

The Latin America Amateur Championship, which awards an exemption for the Masters Tournament to its champion, was under consideration, too. Ortiz, however, was unsure if he could bring himself to play.

Ortiz first contended there in 2015, finishing T3 and only two strokes behind the champion. In contention again the following January, he was disqualified after the third round, mistakenly signing for a 71 when he shot a 72. A year later, Ortiz lost to Chile's Toto Gana in a three-man playoff. The worst of the bunch may have been 2018, when Ortiz held the 54-hole lead and watched as another Chilean, 19-year-old Joaquin Niemann, shot a final-round 63 and ran away with a five-stroke victory.

"I did not want to play," Ortiz said. "I'd had my heart broken four straight years."

Travel issues [delayed Ortiz's arrival](#) at his final Latin America Amateur Championship in January 2019, but he teed it up one last time. And wouldn't you know it, Ortiz once again held the 54-hole lead.

This time around, Ortiz finished the deal, eagling No. 12 and making birdies on three of his final six holes, including the 17th and 18th. Instead of marking the end of his amateur career, it extended it another three months, as Ortiz went on to a T36 at the 2019 Masters. The only amateur who finished ahead of Ortiz at Augusta National Golf Club was future multi-time PGA TOUR winner Viktor Hovland.

Ortiz turned professional shortly thereafter and earned medalist honors at the 2020 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Q-School. A solo second in the opening event felt like a sign of things to come. Until the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down less than a week later.

The PGA TOUR Latinoamérica schedule eventually resumed in December 2020, and Ortiz collected his first professional victory at the 61st Abierto Mexicano de Golf in March 2021, propelling him to a No. 4 finish in the 2020-21 Order of Merit and Korn Ferry Tour membership for the 2022 season.

"I enjoyed my time off. It settled a lot of stuff in my life, especially on the personal side," Ortiz said. "I wasn't the most disciplined kid. I started to take the partying out of my life, everything that was not helping me achieve my goals."

After a T115 finish at the Final Stage of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament last November, though, Ortiz found himself staring at only two guaranteed starts in the season's first eight events (the top-five from the 2020-21 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Order of Merit are exempt for the upcoming events in Panama and Colombia).

This week at The Abaco Club, Ortiz is playing via Korn Ferry's sponsor exemption. A high finish this week would put Ortiz in prime position for the upcoming reshuffles, and almost entirely wash away any worries about earning starts via his priority number.

"You feel the pressure a little bit of, 'Hey, I got to get off to a good start. If not, I'm not going to play in a bit.' Especially with a month off between LECOM (Suncoast Classic) and Louisiana," Ortiz said. "I'm not

really focusing on that. I'm just trying to enjoy my time out here. I'm trying to take this process very patiently. I understand golfers normally peak between 33 and 38, so I understand I have a long way to go. I'm just trying to soak up as much as I can from every week and just expect the best.

"This learning curve when you get out here, you get to see some guys who have been out here for 10 years, 12 years that have been up to the (PGA) TOUR, down to the Korn Ferry Tour," Ortiz continued. "It's a fun thing to watch them play and watch them compete with you. I feel like I play so much better golf than most of them, but they're slapping my ass every week.

"It's fun to see how the experience works out. I'm trying to take this very patiently and just enjoy it."

Play was suspended due to darkness at 5:44 p.m. ET, as 19 players had holes remaining in their second round. The second round will resume at 7:15 a.m. ET, with the cut line and third-round tee times being determined upon its conclusion.

Second-Round Notes

- **Alvaro Ortiz** (1st / -12) is making his sixth career Korn Ferry Tour start; his previous career-high finish is T61 at the 2016 El Bosque Mexico Championship by INNOVA
- **Brandon Harkins** (T2 / -10) and **Seonghyeon Kim** (T7 / -8) equaled the lowest round of the week and the lowest completed second round with matching 7-under 65s
- Harkins placed solo second at the 2020 The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at Baha Mar, finishing four strokes behind the champion, Jared Wolfe
- Harkins graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour following the 2017 season, when he earned his PGA TOUR card via a No. 21 finish in the regular season; he qualified for the FedExCup Playoffs in his debut TOUR season, but fell back to the Korn Ferry Tour after the 2019 season
- **Davis Thompson** (T2 / -10) 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; he played collegiately at the University of Georgia for four seasons (2017-21) and was the 2020-21 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year
- Thompson also won the 2020 Jones Cup, an event whose past champions include **Akshay Bhatia** (2019), Corey Connors (2014), Justin Thomas (2012), and Patrick Reed (2010)
- **Vincent Norrman** (T4 / -9), a native of Stockholm, Sweden, finished T2 at Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, thus earning guaranteed starts in the first 12 events of the 2022 season
- Norrman played collegiately for five seasons, spending the first four at NCAA Division II Georgia Southwestern State University (2016-20) and the last at Florida State University (2020-21)
- In his 47th Korn Ferry Tour start, **Dawson Armstrong** (T4 / -9) is projected to be inside the top 10 after the second round for only the fourth time in his career
 - 2020 Country Club de Bogota Championship – T9 (finished T45)
 - 2020 The King & Bear Classic at World Golf Village – T3 (finished T37)
 - 2020 Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper – 7th (finished T38)
- **Zecheng Dou** (T4 / -9) is a two-time Korn Ferry Tour winner who finished solo third at the 2017 The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club; he, along with Xinjun Zhang, became the first mainland Chinese golfers in history to earn PGA TOUR cards following the 2017 season

- 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/NW at 8-15 mph (gusts up to 20 mph)