



Second-Round Transcripts | The Ascendant presented by Blue | Friday, July 1, 2022

Ryan McCormick (-10, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Middletown, New Jersey | Turned Pro: 2014 | College: St. Johns University
Exempt Status: Top 75 on 2020-21 Regular Season Points List

On his back-to-back 67s...

"I got off to a hot start. It was an early morning and was probably more awake than normal. I quickly got to 5-under on the round. With less wind today, it was playing a little bit easier. I got some putts to go in, hitting it well, so it was nice to get off to a hot start. I hung in for the rest of the day and made a couple bogeys after that, but stayed patient and made some nice par saves coming in."

On his front nine...

"On No. 1 I had 10 feet for birdie and made a nice curl-in putt there, then No. 3 I hit driver at the green and got lucky. It bounced up near the hole and I made the 12-foot putt for eagle, which was a bonus. I birdied the next hole, hit a good shot close, probably 6 or 7 feet. I didn't birdie the par 5, but the drivable hole, No. 6, I hit it near the green then had a good chip. I had 4-5 feet for birdie and made that. I had a couple bogeys on Nos. 7 and 8. I hit a good shot on No. 7, just got fooled there by a soft bounce, and then No. 8 is a hard hole. It's very picturesque but you have to hit a good shot and I didn't, so I was lucky to make four. It was certainly a nice start. Always fun to get off to a good start. "

On playing well consistently for two rounds...

"It's nice. I've always enjoyed being out here in Colorado. Growing up in New Jersey, we don't get to see the mountains, so being out here is really nice. I've played some really good golf out here, so it's nice to be in this position."

On why he is playing well at this course..

"It certainly helps to be in a place that you just like to be at. The setting is beautiful. It's hard to be in a bad mood, especially out here. The greens are in great shape and my game has been rounding into form lately so it's just a nice mix of things."

On what rounded out in his game..

"I'm starting to wedge it better and putt better. I feel like I've been playing good for a while but not scoring well. I just put some more work into my wedges and got a good feel on the greens, so I'm getting better."

On his professional career...

"I've had quite the journey. I've been around the world and back. I've played all over, it's crazy. The end goal has always been to get to the PGA TOUR. I spent a couple years in Canada. I spent a year playing the Asian Tour. I spent a lot of time playing Monday qualifiers just trying to get out here. It's been a long time coming and it's great to be in a position where I can get my PGA TOUR card this year. It's certainly been a goal of mine for eight years. It's been a journey. "

On being inside the top-25 despite not having a win..

"If somebody tells you it's not on their mind, they're lying out here. That's the whole point we're out here, to get to the PGA TOUR. I've been thinking about it for eight years, probably more than that and since college."

That's why you practice all winter and part of the reason why I moved to Jacksonville, Florida. A lot of guys who play out here live there, so I got to practice with them in the offseason and get better. I'm excited to be in this position with five events to go. It's where you want to be."

On playing the weekend after a solid start...

"I feel good. We were the second group off this morning and it doesn't look like it'll get too windy out there. I have no idea how close the guys are behind me and I feel like there will be a couple of good scores out there. We'll see how it looks at the end of the day, but of course you want to be in this position going into the weekend."

On if he's ever had any doubt in his game...

"Yeah, but like I said yesterday, I'm so lucky to have smart people who care, support me and believe in me. There's certainly been times where I didn't get through Q-School and there's been times I spent a lot of flights going back and forth to Asia. I didn't live there, so I would fly from New Jersey all the way over there, probably 20 times. I wasn't playing well and that's a lot of time to sit and think 'What am I doing? Am I good enough?' I'm lucky to have some smart people who believe in me and really help me."

On his go-to long plane ride itinerary...

"It was 16 (hours) from Hong Kong to Newark, so it was 16 then a connection somewhere. It was a full day. I created a sleep playlist and tried to catch up on as many shows as I could. It was wild."

On if he gained any perspective from his journey..

"Being in this position and being in the positions that I have been this year, I appreciate it a lot more than maybe, ever. It's so hard to get out here number one, then it's so hard to play well. To even get in the mix on Sunday is difficult with so many great players out here, so I appreciate it a lot more now."

On if he learned anything about the course today to take into tomorrow...

"Looking at the forecast, it doesn't look like there will be any more rain so it should firm up. The rough around the greens is difficult so I expect it to play more difficult this weekend so I'll be ready for that."

On if he has gotten to enjoy Colorado at all..

"I've played every event except Wichita, so I was gassed for a while there. Definitely will not be hiking. I wish I could, but I have to save my legs. I connected with a family from playing out here when I played in the Colorado Open a few times. [The family] lives down in Denver and they have a couple cats that we're taking care of, so just going home to the cats today."

On where he wants to play golf that he hasn't been able to yet..

"My grandparents are Scottish and going over to Scotland to play would be awesome. I thought about going over there to qualify this year but with the position that I'm in on the points list, it was out of the possibility."

On how he decompresses before the weekend...

"My trainer, Justin James, who happens to be No. 2 in the World Long Drive, suggested doing some ice baths a few weeks ago, so I've been doing that. It's been going well and played well ever since, so I will be getting into that this afternoon and tonight. It's not fun but helps my legs and helps me recover. I'll be taking care of the cats and taking an ice bath."

Dawson Armstrong (-10, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Brentwood, Tennessee | Turned Pro: 2018 | College: Lipscomb University
Exempt Status: Top 75 on 2020-21 Regular Season Points List

On his round and how the week has been for him...

“Colorado is one of my favorite weeks of the year. I love the scenery, the atmosphere, the fact year in and year out this is voted one of the best tournaments of the year, and they seem to top it every single year. Love the people I’m staying with, the golf course is in great shape. It’s just good vibes all around. Today, it finally came to fruition where I finally hit some good shots, hit it close to the hole and was able to have a stress-free day.”

On what was different than yesterday...

“Yesterday morning was really tough. You had to battle through the wind in the middle of the round and at the end. I feel like I did that pretty well yesterday, but, today, a little calmer conditions in the early afternoon. It got a little windier at the end, but really took advantage when I could.”

On whether there was a standout shot from the round...

“Basically every 5-iron I hit – shot out Eric Cole; he thinks I have the best 5-iron in golf. I think my average distance with a 5-iron in my hand was about 7 feet. Hit that really well.”

On taking last week off...

“I really didn’t feel like I got a lot of work done last week, but found something at the end of the week playing with Tyson (Alexander) back in Jacksonville; he gave me a pretty good thought to ponder on while I came out here to start playing. He didn’t mean to give me the advice. I’m glad he did. I hit it pretty well. Thanks to telling me what he kind of works on, I’ve been doing that and been hitting it a lot better than weeks past.”

On what Tyson told him...

“What he told me he works on a lot is just feeling like he can hit soft shots, like, say a 7-iron normally goes 180 yards, he will try to hit it 150. That’s something in the past for me I’ve always felt I do pretty well when I’m able to hit those soft shots. I’m not saying I’m going to go out there and try to hit a 7-iron 110 yards, but the idea of keeping the swing intact really helps me out here, too.”

On his T11 prior to the break...

“I love Wichita. I don’t know why I love Wichita, but I do. I played well there two years ago and played well there this year. I’m not a huge fan of how the golf course sets up for me in Maine. That’s why I took the week off, went home, was with my wife. I’ve just had a different mindset these past few weeks. You don’t have to play your best to perform well out here. You just have to keep it in front of you and avoid the boneheaded mistakes. That’s what I plan on doing the rest of the week.”

On holding lead earlier this year in The Bahamas...

“Well, actually, there are some similarities here. There, I basically jumped in the water immediately after the rounds. Here, I’m going to try to go fishing this afternoon or tomorrow. Anything to get my mind off of golf while I’m off the golf course is helpful for me. I don’t like focusing too much on it while I’m at home or out and about.”

On winning in PGA TOUR Canada back in 2019 and what his career has been like since...

"I'm sure there are some little things I've won here and there, but they've been unofficial things where you're just playing with a few of your buddies, or a mini-tour event. This doesn't feel familiar for me to be up here. This is what we strive for. You don't feel like you're unprepared to be at the top of the leaderboard. You need to try to be as prepared as possible for when it does happen, and you just go out there and stick to your routine, do the right things."

On being a pro for four years...

"Two years in Canada, two years out here so far. I loved the time I had up in Canada, and I've loved it out here as well. The thing I've learned about myself the most is I do well in an environment where I'm able to communicate with the people I'm around the most. Anytime I'm in a comfortable environment, people I'm with, the golf course suits me pretty well, the city is nice, I seem to find myself playing a little better and having more kick in my step. That's what I've found for me. I've learned a lot about my game the last four years, and hope it keeps getting better."

On whether he is known for birdie streaks...

"Usually if I have streaks like that it's from making a lot of putts. I made a single putt on that stretch, a 20-footer on No. 6. It's a drivable par 4 and I almost hit it on the fence line on the road. It was a horrible tee shot, got lucky with the lie, hit it as high as I could and hit it to about 20 feet and made the putt. All the other ones they were 2- or 3- or 4-footers. You have a drivable par 4 in the mix and two par 5s where the only one that's a hard birdie to make is No. 2, and I was lucky enough to hit a solid 8-iron to the back of the green to 5 feet or so. The other ones were just keep it in front of me very well and short game it up to where I have a tap-in."

On how he played last year...

"The double season, I played pretty poorly my first year. COVID helped me, probably more than it helped anyone for me to stay on this Tour. I didn't play well at the beginning of the year, was like 130th going into Portland, Oregon, which was about our 15th tournament of the year. Had it been a normal season, I'd have probably gone back to First or Second Stage of Q-School. Luckily it was a double season, and I played well in the fall, then played well in the spring in 2021, and that kept me out here."

On how he played here in his two previous starts...

"Two years ago, I had my brother on the bag and I was playing really well. My neck gave out on me from a workout on Friday afternoon and I finished (67th). And last year I think I missed the cut on the number. I really do like this golf course. It suits me pretty well. I don't know why I haven't played as well as I think I should have, but glad to see I'm playing well here this year."

On what he's been doing this week to keep himself relaxed...

"I went fishing with my host, walleye fishing off the lake at Nos. 8 and 9 on Wednesday morning for about an hour and a half, two hours. Yesterday, I asked a couple buddies to go to Carter Lake, the reservoir and just jump in, it's really cold water, just refresh yourself. None of them wanted to. It was a little late in the afternoon. I went myself. It was pretty cold. I plan on going back, I plan on fishing again. Going to be a fun weekend either way."



On whether he caught fish...

“Yeah. I think the rule here is two walleye per boat, and we caught six or seven overall in about an hour and a half. We kept two. My host fried them up pretty quickly, baked them. Some of the best fish I’ve ever had.”