



## First-Round Transcripts | The Ascendant presented by Blue | Thursday, June 30, 2022

### **Augusto Núñez (-6 / solo first)**

City Plays From: Yerba Buena, Argentina | Turned Pro: 2012 | Exempt Status: Qualifying Tournament Finishers 11-40 and Ties (thru 2022)

#### *On his round and birdie on No. 18...*

"I felt really comfortable all day. I was comfortable off the tee and getting good numbers for my second shots. I was fighting the putter a little bit, but I'm happy with the round and happy with my birdie on No. 18."

#### *On playing well this season...*

"I've been working on my swing and it has paid off. I'm really enjoying myself out there and that's been good for me. I feel more comfortable on the course and I'm just trying to ride that wave right now."

#### *On if feeling confident in his game is translating into this week...*

"I feel comfortable and I get energy from seeing my name (on the leaderboard) out there. I'm just trying to keep my pace with the players that are on the leaderboard each week. I want to enjoy this as much as I can."

#### *On the past 10 years as a professional..*

"I started out as a caddie in Argentina. My brothers and dad are a caddie over there. I kept my head down, worked hard and dreamed big. It would have been hard to imagine being where I am now. It feels surreal to me but I just want to enjoy it as much as I can. I want to keep working hard because there is still a long way to go."

#### *On if any shots stood out to him today during his round...*

"I made an eagle on No. 3 that was huge, that really helped my confidence. I chipped it in from 50 yards and that triggered the rest of my round."

#### *On his mentality for the rest of the week...*

"I just want to enjoy this and stay patient. My family is actually here for the first time this year, so I want to enjoy that as much as I can and see where I end up on Sunday."

#### *On his family being here..*

"They flew in from Argentina and I'm going to take my daughter to Disney World after this week. I feel more comfortable when they are close to me while I'm playing. My bad days (on the course) don't feel as bad when they're here."

## **Jeremy Paul (T2 / -5)**

City Plays From: Heidelberg, Germany | Turned Pro: 2017 | College: University of Colorado  
Exempt Status: Qualifying Tournament Finishers 11-40 and Ties (thru 2022)

### *On playing near his college town...*

"It was nice to come into familiar territory. I've actually never played here (TPC Colorado) before because they didn't open until I was done with college. Now the [University of Colorado] and [Colorado University] come play here and have memberships, I missed out on that opportunity, but it's nice being here. It's nice being in an area that you're familiar with. I'm staying south of Denver, which is pretty far away but I have family down there so it's a little bit of a drive but it's nice staying somewhere where you're comfortable."

### *On how he ended up in Colorado from Germany*

"A lot of coaches go over to Europe and recruit from the big tournaments and so that's how I first got in contact with Roy Edwards, he's the head coach at [University of Colorado] and then I did an official visit with my brother in September of 2012. It was 85 degrees and then going to Boulder in the summer through September, you really can't not go there. It was an easy decision and I had a great time there."

### *On his first round...*

"It was playing really difficult. I didn't expect it to be that difficult today and the weather turned on us a little bit but I was playing pretty good all day. On No. 18 I hit my drive into the right side stuff and had a tough lie, it was fine and hit it up [to the green] and we were walking for 15-20 seconds and could hear people clapping, I wasn't sure for what. The ball ended up in the hole so that was a special moment in the round. I kept it going from there. You get a few chances out on this golf course but with the type of conditions we had out there today, it's hard to not make any bogeys out here. There are a lot of risk-rewards holes but overall I'm really pleased with my round."

### *On playing well heading into this week..*

"I've been hitting it really well. My iron game has been really good and I'm hitting a lot of greens in regulation which helps. If you hit it solid it helps to make the cut if you play decent. The only difference between finishing 35th and being in the top-10 is that you make a couple more putts a day. If you save two shots a round, it's eight shots which is putting you in the lead from 30th place. That's the difference. If I roll in a couple of putts and see the lines that the ball is having to go in then I feel like I'll be around the top-10 and maybe have a chance coming into the weekend. I'm relying on my solid long game and then when the day is right and putts drop it might go even further up there."

### *On how he spends his free time...*

"My sister is here from Germany. She went to Maine, and then she's here again this week. I'm staying with my girlfriend's parents, they live down in south Denver so it takes a while to get up here. We've spent a lot of time in the car. If the weather holds up we wanted to go to Boulder today. I wanted to get my favorite restaurant in town called 'Pasta Jay's'. If the weather holds up I'll definitely go there and back to old memories, which is always nice."

### *On his order at Pasta J's...*

"They have really good gnocchi. It has tomato sauce and baked with cheese so that's my go to."

### *On if this week feels like a hometown event..*

"It definitely does. If you have experience playing at altitude it definitely helps out here. We don't have a lot of tournaments where we play at altitude and it really depends on how high you hit it and how far



the ball goes. It's also nice to see familiar faces, like Roy Edwards, my college coach came out and the assistant coach with other friends. It's nice having that support from people that you know. It feels like you're home."

## **Scott Harrington (T2 / -5)**

City Plays From: Scottsdale, Arizona | Turned Pro: 2003 | College: Northwestern University

Exempt Status: Qualifying Tournament Finishers 11-40 and Ties (thru 2022)

### *Overall thoughts on his round...*

"I played really well. I was really happy with it. Tee to green, I played really nicely. I made two bogeys and they were wedges from the fairway. A couple poor wedge shots led to bogeys. Tee to green, I played really well, drove it really well, I was getting it out there pretty far, putted really well. Everything was working. No complaints at all, just a couple little wedge shots that are going to bug me. There are some shots out here that can give you some anxiety and I handled those well. Got the putter going a little bit on the back nine. I was happy with everything."

### *On his eagle at No. 15...*

"Hit a great tee shot. It was windy, rainy, kind of the heaviest it had been drizzling at the time. The wind was kind of moving around. Ended up pulling a good club. Had a 6-iron in... hit a great shot to 5 feet and made it. Those are always nice."

### *On a T3 here in 2019 and the course...*

"I really like the golf course. I think it sets up really well for me. I don't really know why, but I feel like I typically play pretty well at altitude. I feel like I do a pretty good job before the tournament of dialing in (distance adjustments). You can hit great shots and they might not turn out how you're thinking. I've always done pretty well when I've played at altitude, so I'm pretty comfortable with that. I really enjoy the golf course. I think you really have to hit it well out here. You can't get away with a whole lot. With how I'm hitting it right now, I like my chances. But that was a really fun week (in 2019). I made a really nice run in the final round and had a chance. Nothing but great memories."

### *On taking some time off after a couple missed cuts...*

"The last month and half has been kind of tough. I actually got COVID when I was in Chicago. It wasn't that bad, but it really affected me after I was better. I didn't feel like myself. I couldn't put a finger on it, I just did not feel right. I was still on the road through all this, and it was affecting my mental state. I was not enjoying myself. At BMW (Charity Pro-Am) was kind of the peak of it. I was kind of miserable, not feeling right, and it affected my game. Just being stuck on the road when you're physically not all the way there... I left Greenville and I was like, *I'm not coming back to play until I want to play golf*. I was kind of at a crossroads. I'm 41 years old and I've never had these thoughts of, *is this what I want to do?* I was really having no fun. I went home; we just got a puppy two and a half weeks ago, so I was having a great time with my puppy, took a week off, and grinded really hard last week and was excited to come here. I really needed a hard reset. A lot of it was physical stuff that was goofy, but I just wasn't having any fun. Every single person out here is excited to play, and they're excited to be here. I found myself the last couple weeks I was out on the road not like that. I was just physically there, but not mentally there. I'm really excited for a good push to end the year."

### *On what's kept him motivated...*

"Before I got my (PGA) TOUR card, I always felt like I belonged out there. I felt like if I got out there, I would do well. The reason I never thought about quitting before then was because I was always progressing. I was on this Tour for eight straight years and never had that one year that makes you rethink if this is what you should be doing. Every year I was going from No. 73 on the list to No. 68, then 60, then 50. It was snail's pace, but if you're making the (Korn Ferry Tour) Finals and you're fully exempt

out here, you're just one week away from getting your TOUR card, so I was always pretty close. Then I had some success on TOUR, played a couple years out there, not really well last year. Now the motivation is knowing I can play out there, and it's really fun to play out there. It's our dream. Getting to do that for a couple years, I don't want that to be it. I feel like I still have great years ahead of me. At the beginning of the year, I was extremely motivated to get my card back. I really want to give this a good hard push here, and I want and expect to be playing back out there next year."

*On PGA TOUR cards returning to Q-School...*

"I knew the Finals were going away, which is unfortunate. I had a lot of years where I finished in that range where I wasn't going to get my card but I had the Finals to look forward to. But that's okay. Adding the Q-School cards will certainly add something to the excitement of that week for fans, and it's great to have that chance as a player. I haven't put much thought into that. I'm not expecting to have to go to Q-School. But, if I need to, it's nice to have that carrot if you have a really good week. Frankly, it's probably the way it should be. That was always a week growing up, before I was a pro, that was a really fun tournament to watch on TV, terrifying to play when you're on the bubble. It adds a lot to that week for sure."

*On whether he was itching to get back on the road during his reset...*

"Not itching to get on the road. I don't take much time off of competing, typically don't take more than a day or two off when I go home. There was a time five or six days in when I wanted to go work at it again. But I was looking forward to taking a full two weeks. It was really beneficial. I did a lot of stuff equipment-wise. I'm playing new irons, new putter. I put a lot of work into that, work into golf swing stuff, and I came here feeling really good."

*On his puppy...*

"Norman. He's a little French bulldog, a 6-pound terror right now. My wife and them are up here right now. Hopefully he's not tearing up our rental house. My wife has been up here a week and a half; she has horse shows this past week and this week, so she drove up with our dogs."

## **Erik Barnes (T2 / -5)**

City Plays From: Marion, Indiana | Turned Pro: 2011 | College: Austin Peay State University  
Exempt Status: Top 75 on 2020-21 Regular Season Points List (thru 2022)

### *On his round and what stood out to him...*

"I played nice. I didn't leave a whole lot of shots out there other than a couple easier par 5s I didn't make birdie on from the middle of the fairway, which was really frustrating. I hit two really good tee shots on the drivable holes on the front. I hit it to like 20 feet on No. 3 and two-putted, so easy birdie there. And I hit it to like 12 feet on No. 6, so that's another easy birdie. I took advantage of some of the holes you've really got to get, and I hit a couple quality iron shots coming down the stretch on No. 18 and No. 8 for some easy birdies there. Didn't do anything overly special, but I hit some quality shots at the right time."

### *On being the second player to eagle No. 13...*

"That was during the time it looked like we were going to get dumped on. It was sprinkling on and off, and the wind was blowing like 25 miles per hour. They had the tee one box up at 725 yards or something and I hit a really good drive down the left side of the fairway. My adjusted numbers were around 270 (yards) front, 280 hole. It's pumping 20 (miles per hour) downwind. It's a perfect 7-wood, so if I could fit it in the little space between the left rough line and the bunker it could be pretty good. It kind of went up that hill, fed over to the right and had 12 feet, made it dead center. It was sweet. Never going to do that again on that hole, probably."

### *On his true yardage to the hole...*

"I had 311, 312, 315, something like that. It was straight downwind."

### *On having two top-10s at this event...*

"The fairways are fairly generous here, but the bunkers are horrible here, not condition-wise, but if you hit it in them it's very difficult to get balls on the green from fairway bunkers. It's about driving the ball well here. If you don't drive the ball well here, it's really difficult to score. If you start playing out of the rough or fairway bunkers, you have no chance of making birdies. I generally drive it well, and that's a big benefit here."

### *On his last couple weeks with his first missed cut of the season and playing the U.S. Open...*

"I started not playing that well. I think it was just so much excitement from locking up my (PGA) TOUR card, and I played really well to qualify for the U.S. Open. I didn't really want to play BMW (Charity Pro-Am). It was an obligation thing. My mind was never there. It was always, *let's get to Boston, let's get to Boston*. And it showed. I actually didn't hit it well at the U.S. Open at all, and I only missed the cut by a shot. It's a lot of confidence knowing I didn't play well at all and only lost to 63 guys. I would've been way more frustrated had I played well and missed the cut by a shot. Last week, I was playing fine the whole week and I just had this random seven-hole stretch where I could not hit the golf ball remotely where I was looking. I think I played seven holes at 7-over par. But it worked out great. I just wanted to be home. That was a lot of in a row. I jumped in a plane Friday afternoon and was home Saturday, Sunday, Monday and didn't fly here until Tuesday. Getting home and being able to spend time with the family was pretty awesome. Really looking forward to playing well this week."

### *On this potentially being his first 18-hole lead on the Korn Ferry Tour...*

"I don't think it's going to hold, especially if this wind lies down like it is right now. It would be cool. But I want to be leading it after Sunday. I try not to worry too much about that."

*On whether he would've guessed earlier this week he'd make eagle on No. 13...*

"No. Zero-percent chance. I would've bet the house I wouldn't make three on that hole. That is one of those holes where birdie is a good score. To even have a chance at making a three is pure luck almost. I hit two of the best shots I could hit and rolled in a 12-footer. It was pretty awesome. I think the first thing I said was, 'Well, that's the only time I'll ever do that.' You don't expect to make... especially when (the hole location) is tucked over the bunker like that. It was lucky I hit it directly down the left side of the fairway so I had a decent angle to where I could hit a ball on the front of the green and it could get close to the hole."

*On whether he'd seen or heard about guys getting close to the green in two...*

"I don't think we ever play it straight downwind. They've moved that box up before, but to have it up and then the wind... when we got there we thought it was supposed to be out of the right. To get it that much downwind in that situation, it was raining on and off so the wind was blowing as hard as it did all day. Kind of lucky. To hit those shots was pretty sweet. I didn't really expect that."