

Second-Round Notes – Friday, July 1, 2022

Course Setup: TPC Colorado (Par 72 / 7,995 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Ryan McCormick	67-67—134 (-10)
	Dawson Armstrong	69-65—134 (-10)
T3	Three Tied	136 (-8)

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

Ryan McCormick, Dawson Armstrong share 36-hole lead at The Ascendant presented by Blue

BERTHOUD, Colorado – Ryan McCormick and Dawson Armstrong reached 10-under par and earned shares of the 36-hole lead of The Ascendant presented by Blue. Both are two strokes clear of three players tied for third at 8-under par.

McCormick got off to a hot start at TPC Colorado Friday, playing his first six holes at 5-under par. The 30-year-old New Jersey native opened his round with a birdie at the par-5 first, drove the green at the at the par-4 third and drained a 12-foot eagle putt, and circled two more birdies on Nos. 4 and 6. Back-to-back bogeys at the par-4 seventh and par-3 eighth were negated with birdies at the par-4 11th and the par-5 13th.

“I got off to a hot start,” McCormick said. “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.”

Two consecutive rounds of 5-under 67 earned McCormick a share of the 36-hole lead for the first time in his Korn Ferry Tour career. McCormick’s only previous lead of any kind in 65 career Korn Ferry Tour starts was a share of the 18-hole lead at the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard earlier this season.

“I’ve always enjoyed being out here in Colorado,” McCormick said. “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, it’s nice to be in this position.”

McCormick turned professional in 2014 following a collegiate career at St. Johns University and spent his first four season playing internationally in Asia, along with PGA TOUR Canada and PGA TOUR

Latinoamérica. McCormick finished T126 at Final Stage of the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament Finals, leaving him with conditional membership for what became the 2020-21 season.

A successful Monday qualifier and T14 finish at the 2020 Korn Ferry Challenge at TPC Sawgrass, the first event in the Return to Golf amid the COVID-19 pandemic, changed the course McCormick's career. As he A T6 finish the next week sent him soaring up the priority ranking via the reshuffle and set him up to play the rest of the season. At the end of the combined 2020-21 season, McCormick earned fully exempt status for 2022 with a No. 56 finish on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List.

In 17 starts this season, McCormick has three top-10s, including two in a row entering this week, and a career-high finish of T2 at the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard earlier this season.

"I've had quite the journey," McCormick says. "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. 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. "

Armstrong matched the lowest round of the day with a 7-under 65 and rose to the top of the leaderboard.

Starting on the par-4 10th, Armstrong opened birdie-bogey before he birdied the two par 5s on the back nine (Nos. 13 and 15). The 26-year-old Lipscomb University alum fired off five more birdies in his first six holes on the front nine (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6) as he reached 10-under par.

"Colorado is one of my favorite weeks of the year," Armstrong said. "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."

The Brentwood, Tennessee resident turned professional in 2018 following a strong career at Lipscomb University, and like McCormick, played internationally on PGA TOUR Canada and PGA TOUR Latinoamérica as he pursued Korn Ferry Tour status. Armstrong's break came in 2019, when he won on PGA TOUR Canada and finished No. 8 on the Order of Merit for Korn Ferry Tour membership.

Armstrong finished T7 at Final Stage of the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, earning him guaranteed starts in the first 12 events of what became the combined 2020-21 season. Armstrong lost in a playoff for a T2 and recorded a T3 en route to a No. 54 finish on the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List.

"I loved the time I had up in Canada, and I've loved it out here as well," Armstrong said. "Anytime I'm in a comfortable environment... 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."

Armstrong has nine made cuts in 15 starts this season, with the highlight being a T7 at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club back in January. Last week, Armstrong tied his career-low round of 63 in the third round of the Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics for a T11, his fifth top-25 this season.

Armstrong's only previous lead in 60 career Korn Ferry Tour starts was a co-lead after the first round of this year's The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club.

Third-round pairings will run from 6:30 a.m. through 12:40 p.m. local time off the first tee.

Second-Round Notes

- The 36-hole cut was made at 1-under par with 71 players advancing to the weekend
- **Zecheng Dou** (T3 / -8) sits inside the top five through 36 holes for the fifth time this season
 - The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic: T4 (finished solo second)
 - LECOM Suncoast Classic: 1st (finished T28)
 - Huntsville Championship: T5 (finished T13)
 - Simmons Bank Open: T4 (finished T5)
- **Vince India** (T3 / -8) recorded a hole-in-one with a 6-iron 238-yard par-3 second
- India stood T6 after 36 holes of last year's The Ascendant presented by Blue and eventually finished solo sixth
- **Jeremy Paul** (T9 / -6), a University of Colorado alum, remained inside the top 10 after a 1-under 71 in the second round
- **Justin Suh** (T19 / -4) carded the low round of the tournament with an 8-under 64, moving him up 104 spots to T19; he leads the field in birdies (14) through 36 holes and made his 13th consecutive cut
- Colorado natives and sponsor exemptions **Jake Staiano** (T53 / -1) and **Derek Oland** (T53 / -1) made the cut
 - Staiano posted his third made cut of the season, while Oland recorded his first made cut in his sixth career Korn Ferry Tour start
- **Zahkai Brown** (T26 / -3) was the only Monday qualifier who made the 36-hole cut
- Brown successfully Monday qualified into this tournament in 2019, finishing T59 and receiving a sponsor exemption in 2020 (missed cut)
- The Ascendant presented by Blue is the 19th 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

Second-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 72): 71.762 [-0.238]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 36): 35.483 [-0.517]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 36): 36.278 [0.278]
- Toughest Hole: No. 17, Par 4, 496 yards – 4.371 [+0.371]
- Easiest Hole: No. 5, Par 5, 620 yards – 4.530 [-0.470]