

### Third-Round Notes – Saturday, July 2, 2022

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

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#### Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Zecheng Dou	69-67-68—204 (-12)
	Ryan McCormick	67-67-70—204 (-12)
	Dawson Armstrong	69-65-70—204 (-12)
T4	Carl Yuan	71-70-64—205 (-11)
	Brandon Matthews	71-67-68—205 (-11)
	Augusto Núñez	66-70-69—205 (-11)

#### Quick Links

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

### Three players share 54-hole lead at The Ascendant presented by Blue

**BERTHOUD, Colorado** – Ryan McCormick and Dawson Armstrong, who began the day as [36-hole co-leaders](#), fired matching 2-under 70s and remained atop the leaderboard following Saturday’s third round. The two were joined by two-time Korn Ferry Tour winner Zecheng Dou, who carded a 4-under 68 and caught Armstrong and McCormick at 12-under par. The trio will comprise the final group of Sunday’s final round of The Ascendant presented by Blue.

All three are one stroke clear of three players at 11-under par, while another 10 players will begin the final round within either three or four strokes off the lead.

While Armstrong and McCormick hold their first 54-hole lead or co-lead on the Korn Ferry Tour, this marks the fourth such lead or co-lead of Dou’s career, as well as his second of the season. Dou converted two of those leads into victories at the 2017 Digital Ally Open and 2019 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, but fell in a playoff at the 2022 The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club.

Dou carded a bogey-free 4-under 68, one of five bogey-free rounds Saturday, and clustered his four birdies across the first eight holes. The 25-year-old Beijing, China representative birdied the par-5 first and fifth, along with the drivable par-4 third and par-3 eighth.

“Started off really solid,” Dou said. “I knew there were chances out there on the front, and I caught it every easy hole. I hit the green on a par 4, hit the green (in two) on par 5s, so kind of easy birdies. Coming to the back nine, missed a lot of chances today. Those 10-footers and 6-footers, I just couldn’t read them right. I’m going to work on that later.”

Dou turned professional in 2014 and played predominantly on PGA TOUR China. Dou won four times in 2016 and finished atop the Order of Merit, earning him fully exempt Korn Ferry Tour status for 2017. As a Korn Ferry Tour rookie, Dou won once and finished No. 16 on the regular season money list, making he and Xinjun Zhang the first mainland Chinese players to earn a PGA TOUR card.

Dou made just four cuts in his 23 starts on TOUR, finishing 227th in the 2017-18 FedExCup Standings and falling back to the Korn Ferry Tour. Dou won the season-opening event, but tallied 15 missed cuts in his next 23 starts and missed out on a PGA TOUR card.

Last season, Dou once again made a run at a PGA TOUR card, ultimately coming up one stroke short at the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna.

Dou has 12 made cuts in 16 starts this season, including three top 10s, highlighted by a runner-up finish at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club.

Making his 67th start on the Korn Ferry Tour, McCormick, like Dou, opened his third round with a birdie at the par-5 first and carded two more birdies on Nos. 6 and 10 before his one bogey of the day, which came at the par-3 14th.

"I didn't have my best stuff today," said McCormick, a resident of Middletown, New Jersey. "Just tried to do my best with what I had, and I thought I did a pretty good job of that today. It's nice not to lose any ground, that's for sure."

McCormick turned pro in 2014, spending his first four seasons 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, 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 of McCormick's career.

"That got it rolling," McCormick said of the 2020 Monday qualifier. "At Second Stage (of the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament) I birdied a few holes coming in to even make it to Final Stage. Granted, I didn't play well enough, but that felt like a win in itself. I think back to that a lot, and I'm sure those experiences will help me tomorrow late in the round."

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

Unlike Dou and McCormick, Armstrong started his day off with a bogey at the par-5 first and finished with just three pars on the front nine. The 26-year-old Lipscomb University alum scattered five birdies across his card at Nos. 3, 5, 7, and 11, along with the aforementioned bogey at the first, and bogeys at Nos. 6 and 9.

"I just didn't get any putts to fall," Armstrong said. "I didn't get anything out of the round basically the entire front nine with the exception of maybe the putt on No. 7. Finally found a little bit of a rhythm starting on No. 11 and made a few putts. I didn't really hit it how I wanted it for a majority of the day,

but kept it in front of me for the most part, and at the end of the round I made two pretty good putts on Nos. 16 and 17 to keep the momentum going.”

The Brentwood, Tennessee resident turned professional in 2018 and, like McCormick, played internationally 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.

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 and finished T11, his fifth top-25 this season.

“You plan on being here,” Armstrong said. “You don't play on this Tour and you don't play golf just to be comfortable with finishing fifth or seventh. This is a position that I feel like I'm ready for. I feel like I've always been ready for. I tend to find myself really focusing in a lot more when I get up near the top.”

Final-round tee times will run in groups of three from 6:48 a.m. through 9 a.m. local time off the first and 10th tee.

### Third-Round Notes

- **Pierceson Coody** (T17 / -7) tied the Korn Ferry Tour record for most consecutive birdies to start a round, as he birdied Nos. 1-7; he is the fourth player in history to accomplish the feat
  - Coody – Nos. 1-7 at TPC Colorado, 2022 The Ascendant presented by Blue (Round 3)
  - Ryan Ruffels – Nos. 1-7 at Oakridge Country Club, 2020 Utah Championship (Round 3)
  - Kyle Wilshire – Nos. 1-7 at Oakridge Country Club, 2017 Utah Championship (Round 2)
  - Rocky Walcher – Nos. 1-7 at Willowbend Country Club, 2000 Wichita Open (Round 3)
- The last five Korn Ferry Tour tournaments were won by a 54-hole leader / co-leader, as have seven of the last nine events
- Each of the last two events and five of the last seven events were won by a 36-hole leader / co-leader
- Korn Ferry Tour Points List leader **Carl Yuan** (T4 / -11) carded the lowest round of the week, an 8-under 64
- **Augusto Núñez** (T4 / -11) can earn #TOURBound status with a 2-way T3 or higher; the Korn Ferry Tour is currently using 875 points as a fail-safe threshold for players to finish inside The 25 and earn a PGA TOUR card at regular season’s end
- University of Colorado alum **Jeremy Paul** (T7 / -9) remained inside the top 10 with a 3-under 69; he enters the final round inside the top 10 for the third time this season and in 30th Korn Ferry Tour start
  - T4 – 2022 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation (finished T5)
  - T8 – 2022 REX Hospital Open (finished T19)

- Five players who stand T7 or higher have previously won on the Korn Ferry Tour, including four who won earlier this season: **Zecheng Dou** (T1 / -12), Yuan (T4 / -11), **Brandon Matthews** (T4 / -11), **Harrison Endycott** (T7 / -9), **Davis Thompson** (T7 / -9)
- Three players who made the cut on the number moved into the top 25: **Brett White** (T17 / -7), **Trevor Cone** (T17 / -7), **Braden Thornberry** (T17 / -7)
- Colorado native and sponsor exemption **Derek Oland** (T44 / -4) climbed nine spots on the leaderboard with a 3-under 69, while fellow Coloradoan and sponsor exemption **Jake Staiano** (T63 / -1) fell 10 places after an even-par 72
- 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

### Third-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 72): 69.986 [-2.014]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine): 34.268 [-1.732]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine): 35.718 [-0.282]
- Toughest Hole: No. 17, Par 4, 498 yards – 4.183 [+0.183]
- Easiest Hole: No. 3, Par 4, 323 yards – 3.380 [-0.620]