

Final-Round Notes – Sunday, July 3, 2022

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

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
1	Zecheng Dou	69-67-68-67—271 (-17)
2	Carl Yuan	71-70-64-67—272 (-16)
T3	Jeremy Paul	67-71-69-66—273 (-15)
	Brandon Matthews	70-67-68-68—273 (-15)
	Augusto Núñez	66-70-69-68—273 (-15)

Quick Links

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

Zecheng Dou wins The Ascendant presented by Blue, secures return to PGA TOUR

BERTHOUD, Colorado – Zecheng Dou is officially headed back to the PGA TOUR. Dou, a 25-year-old who plays from Beijing, China, earned his third career Korn Ferry Tour victory and first since 2019 as he emerged from a crowded Sunday leaderboard with a one-stroke win over fellow countryman Carl Yuan at The Ascendant presented by Blue.

Dou's victory and the 500 points which came along with it increased his season total to 1,207 points, putting him No. 2 on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List, with only Yuan in front of him.

Dou and PGA TOUR University Class of 2021 alum Davis Thompson, who finished T6, became the ninth and 10th players to earn #TOURBound status this season. 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. TOUR cards for the 2022-23 season will be awarded upon the conclusion of the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna next month.

"It feels real now," Dou said of his impending return to the PGA TOUR. "The first year I got there, I kind of felt I wasn't ready. But it's been three years now from that time, and I do feel like all parts of my game are set for the big TOUR."

Dou began the final round at TPC Colorado as one of three 54-hole co-leaders. On three previous occasions, Dou held a 54-hole lead or co-lead in a Korn Ferry Tour event. Dou converted the first two into victories at the 2017 Digital Ally Open and 2019 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay. The only misstep among those three came earlier this season at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club, where Dou bogeyed two of the final three holes of regulation, fell into a playoff, and hit two shots in the penalty area on the second playoff hole and finished runner-up to Brandon Harkins.

“I was thinking about it last night,” Dou said of his record as a 54-hole leader or co-leader. “A lot of players try not to think about it, but I like to look at everything. I knew I should be confident, I shouldn’t be scared of anything. I should be the one that’s relaxed because I know I have a better chance of playing good.”

By the time Dou stepped to the 18th tee Sunday afternoon, he built a one-stroke lead with six birdies and zero bogeys through 16 holes.

Dou’s birdies came at the par-5 fifth, par-4 ninth and 10th, par-5 13th and 15th, and par-3 16th. The back-to-back birdies moved Dou ahead of Yuan, who moved into contention with birdies on five of the first six holes of the back nine. As Dou stuffed an approach to 5 feet at the difficult par-4 17th and tapped in for par, Yuan left a 10-foot par putt short on the par-4 18th and gave his countryman a little extra cushion for the 72nd hole.

Dou found the fairway bunker off the tee, played up the fairway and knocked a wedge 18 feet past the pin, and comfortably two-putted for bogey and a one-stroke win. Dou signed for a 5-under 67 in the final round, which took him to 17-under par for the week.

“I just feel more confident in every situation,” Dou said. “Leading or a couple behind, I know I can play good.”

Dou turned professional at age 17 and set out on PGA TOUR China in 2014. Two years later, Dou won four times and finished atop the 2016 PGA TOUR China Order of Merit, earning fully exempt status on the Korn Ferry Tour.

The Dallas, Texas resident recorded a win and solo-third as a rookie in 2017, finishing No. 16 on the Korn Ferry Tour regular season money list and, along with Xinjun Zhang, becoming the first mainland Chinese golfer to earn a PGA TOUR card. On TOUR, however, Dou struggled mightily, only making four cuts in 23 starts and finishing no higher than T51. At No. 227 on the 2017-18 FedExCup Standings, Dou was relegated to the Korn Ferry Tour and conditional status for the 2019 season.

Dou won the season-opening event in The Bahamas, a victory he cited Sunday afternoon as the most important of the three.

“Every win is really special, but if you really wanted me to rate one, I’d say the one in 2019,” Dou said of his favorite Korn Ferry Tour win. “That was the biggest fallout I’ve had, and it was a really tough season on the PGA TOUR. I didn’t even make it to the Korn Ferry Tour Finals. That was one I’d say that kept me moving.”

Although Dou’s victory in 2019 was not enough for a PGA TOUR return (he only made seven cuts in his final 23 starts of the season), it granted him fully exempt status on the Korn Ferry Tour for what became the 2020-21 season. Needing a win in the regular season finale to secure a TOUR card, Dou finished one stroke behind David Skinns, who won the Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna for a second time and took the final available spot in The 25.

Dou entered the week with three top-10s on the season, two of which came in the first three events, and the other two months ago. He also had missed cuts in three consecutive starts, which dealt a blow to his confidence.

"I got really worried," Dou said. "On this Tour, it's so tough... and cut lines get into your mind so much. I missed two cuts, and the third event I was at 6-under and still thinking about the cut line, which was at 4-under, and made three straight bogeys, missed the cut by one. From there, I'm like, *I've got to take everything really serious now. My golf game could fall apart right away.*"

"I learned a little bit from (2019) as well, definitely."

Dou believes his game in its best shape to date, and he's taking it back to the PGA TOUR.

The 2022 Korn Ferry Tour season continues Thursday, July 14 with the first round of the Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS at Panther Creek Country Club in Springfield, Illinois.

Final-Round Notes

- **Zecheng Dou** (1st / -17) broke the 72-hole tournament scoring record and totaled a 17-under 271, eclipsing Tag Ridings' 16-under 272 from last year
- **Carl Yuan** (2nd / -16) posted his third runner-up finish of the season and sits atop the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List for the 14th consecutive event
- **Jeremy Paul** (T3 / -15) posted a career-high finish; his previous career-high finish was T5 at the 2022 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation
- Paul carded the most eagles in the field (three – par-4 18th in Round 1, par-5 fifth in Round 2, par-5 fifth in Round 4)
- **Brandon Matthews** (T3 / -15) secured his highest finish of the season since his win at the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard, marking his third top-3 of the season
- **MJ Daffue** (T6 / -14) and **Conner Godsey** (T10 / -12) carded the lowest round of the day with 7-under 65s
- Daffue and **Justin Suh** (T10 / -12) led the field with 24 birdies apiece
- The Ascendant presented by Blue was 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 was \$750,000, with \$135,000 going to the champion, **Zecheng Dou**; he also earned 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

Final-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 72): 70.042 [-1.958]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine - 36): 34.944 [-1.056]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine - 36): 35.099 [-0.901]
- Toughest Hole: No. 8, Par 3, 194 yards – 3.225 [-0.225]
- Easiest Hole: No. 15, Par 5, 580 yards – 4.408 [-0.592]