

First-Round Notes – Thursday, August 4, 2022

Course Setup: Oakridge Country Club (Par 71 / 7,045 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Jeremy Paul	63 (-8)
	Andrew Kozan	63 (-8)
	Ben Silverman	63 (-8)
T4	Five Tied	64 (-7)

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

Three players share 18-hole lead at the Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank

FARMINGTON, Utah – Jeremy Paul, Andrew Kozan and Ben Silverman are tied atop the leaderboard at 8-under after the first round of the Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank, giving each of them a share of the 18-hole lead.

Kozan established a new career-low round, eclipsing his previous best of 65 during the second round of the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard, while Paul and Silverman tied their career-low round of 63 in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event.

Paul, who plays from Heidelberg, Germany, carded four birdies in his first seven holes at Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 7. The 28-year-old's only bogey of the day, a four at the par-4 14th, was sandwiched between back-to-back birdies on Nos. 12-13 and Nos. 15-16. Paul tacked on another birdie at the par-4 18th to cap off the opening round.

"My strategy is pretty aggressive," Paul said. "I have a lot of drivers out here and I was driving it really well today, so it set me up for a lot of short wedge shots. I able to hit a lot of good wedge shots to put me in a good position and then I was able to capitalize on a lot of them."

Having played 20 events this year, Paul entered the week with seven top-25s, including three top-10s, highlighted by a career-high T3 at The Ascendant presented by Blue last month.

Paul went through the 2016 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament as an amateur in the fall semester of his senior season at University of Colorado. A T72 finish at Final Stage left him with conditional status. Paul continued to play for Colorado (and earned his degree) until April 2017, when the United Leasing & Finance Championship awarded him a sponsor exemption. The BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by TD SYNEX did the same in May, but Paul would not reshuffle up the priority ranking until a month later at

the 2017 Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics, where he finished T27 as a sponsor exemption.

By the end of the 2017 season, Paul had just four made cuts in 12 starts and ranked 200th on the money list. Paul spent the following three seasons playing predominantly on PGA TOUR Canada (2018, 2019, 2021), along with three starts on PGA Tour Latinoamérica.

Paul earned Korn Ferry Tour membership for the second time via a No. 10 finish on the 2021 PGA TOUR Canada Order of Merit, highlighted by four top-10s in eight starts, including a T3 at the Rolling Green Championship. With an exemption to Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament last November, Paul finished T11 for guaranteed starts in the first eight events this season.

Kozan, a rookie on the Korn Ferry Tour, opened the week with a bogey-free first round. Kozan started on the par-4 first, making his first birdie at the par-5 second followed by a birdie at the par-4 fifth. Before making the turn, he rolled in three birdies in a row on Nos. 7, 8 and 9, bringing him to 5-under after nine holes. The 23-year-old climbed to the top of the leaderboard late in the round, birdying three of the final four holes (Nos. 15, 17 and 18).

"It was great to get off to a good start," Kozan said. "I shot 5-under on the front and missed maybe one or two greens coming down the stretch. It's a pretty simple golf course for the most part, so just keep the ball in front of you and give yourself a lot of birdie opportunities and then play the game of odds to give yourself a good number."

This week marks the 20th career Korn Ferry Tour start for Kozan, who graduated from Auburn University last May, played the 2021 U.S. Open as an amateur, and turned professional prior to the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament. Kozan was a medalist at First Stage's West Palm Beach, Florida site, made it through Second Stage [on the number](#), and earned guaranteed starts for the first 12 events of the 2022 season with a T2 at Final Stage.

Thursday marks the second time Kozan held a share of the lead in his Korn Ferry Tour career, the only other occurrence being T1 after 54-holes at The Panama Championship, where he eventually finished T15, marking his highest of the season. In his previous 19 starts, Kozan has made just four cuts and enters the week No. 153 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List.

"I've had a lot of ups and downs," the Florida resident said. "I got off to a decent start in the beginning (of the season) but obviously had some struggles the last couple of weeks, and months, but the game hasn't felt that far off. A lot of missed cuts were by one or two shots, so just staying positive through that. I'm coming out with the mindset every week that I belong out here and can still win every week."

Silverman joined the field curtesy of a top-25 finish at last week's Price Cutter Charity Championship, finishing 12th, his best of the season. Starting on No. 10, the 34-year-old was 1-over through his first two holes after a bogey at the par-3 11th, his only blemish of the round. With birdies on Nos. 13, 15 and 16, he made the turn at 2-under before entering a stretch that propelled him up the leaderboard. Silverman birdied six of his final nine holes, including three in a row on Nos. 7-9 to close out his first round.

"It feels amazing," Silverman said in response to his 8-under 63. "It started slow being 1-over through the first two, but I started on the tougher holes on the course, Nos. 10 and 11, probably the two hardest

holes out here. I've been playing well coming into this week so I knew it would come together eventually, and it did. It feels good."

Silverman, who plays from Concord, Canada, turned professional out of Florida Atlantic University in 2010. He played predominantly on PGA TOUR Canada early in his career until earning status at the 2015 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament. In his second season on the Korn Ferry Tour in 2017, Silverman logged five top-10 finishes, including a victory at the Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper, and secured his PGA TOUR card for the 2017-18 season with a 10th-place finish on the regular season money list.

In two seasons from 2017-19, Silverman made 54 PGA TOUR starts and logged seven top-25 finishes, but only two in the top 10, returning to the Korn Ferry Tour in 2020. In the 2020-21 combined season, Silverman made 12 cuts in 32 starts, finishing 123rd on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List.

This season, Silverman's first Korn Ferry Tour showing was a result of a successful Monday qualifier into the Veritex Bank Championship, making the cut and finishing T60. Silverman would gain entry into two more events in May, both resulting in missed cuts.

"I haven't had good status for two years really," Silverman said. "I've just been focusing on how to improve and the results are starting to come together lately. I'm just going to keep focusing on what I'm doing. If I get ahead of myself, that's when everything falls apart. If you think about results, it's done. I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing."

Second-round tee times will from 7:15 a.m. through 2:30 p.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

First-Round Notes

- Twelve players carded bogey-free rounds Thursday
- **Jeremy Paul** (T1 / -8) holds the 18-hole lead / co-lead for the second time this season; he also led after the first round of the REX Hospital Open, but finished T19
 - Paul has been inside the top-10 after 18-holes seven times this season
 - Paul tied for most birdies in the field with nine, alongside co-leader **Ben Silverman** (T1 / -8)
- Silverman sits T1 after 18-holes for the first time since 2016 at the Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS, where he eventually finished T39
- Silverman's previous best 18-hole position in the 2022 season was a T18 two weeks ago at the Price Cutter Charity Championship
- **Andrew Kozan** (T1 / -8) sits inside the top-25 for the third time this season, his previous best 18-hole position being T18 at the Price Cutter Charity Championship two weeks ago
- Utah native and local, **Patrick Fishburn** (T9 / -6) carded three eagles in Thursday's round, the most of any player in the field, at the par-5 second, par-5 seventh and par-4 12th
- Monday qualifier **Hayden Springer** (T4 / -7) sits inside the top-10 for the first time in his five Korn Ferry Tour starts
- The Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank is the 22nd 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

First-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 71): 69.160 [-1.840]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – par 36): 34.609 [-1.391]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine – par 35): 34.551 [-0.449]
- Toughest Hole: No. 10, Par 4, 517 yards – 4.365 [+0.365]
- Easiest Hole: No. 15, Par 5, 547 yards – 4.231 [-0.769]