

Second-Round Notes – Friday, May 13, 2022

Course Setup: Holston Hills Country Club (Par 70 / 7,163 yards)

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Leaderboard

Pos.	Name	Scores
T1	Anders Albertson	62-67—129 (-11)
	MJ Daffue	64-65—129 (-11)
T3	Rob Oppenheim	65-66—131 (-9)
	George Cunningham	65-66—131 (-9)
	Eric Cole	65-66—131 (-9)

Quick Links

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

Anders Albertson, MJ Daffue share 36-hole lead at Visit Knoxville Open

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee – MJ Daffue, a native of Pretoria, South Africa, joined Anders Albertson atop the leaderboard Friday evening upon suspension of the second round of the Visit Knoxville Open. Albertson followed Thursday's 8-under 62 with a 3-under 67 Friday, while Daffue followed a 6-under 64 with a 5-under 65. The co-leaders hold a two-stroke edge over a trio of players at 9-under par.

The second round was suspended for just under two hours (4:26 p.m. through 6:25 p.m.) due to lightning before its suspension for the day due to darkness at 8:42 p.m. With five players still playing their second round, the 36-hole cut will be made Saturday morning. The second round will resume at 7:45 a.m. ET, with the cut line and third-round groupings being determined upon its conclusion.

Both Albertson and Daffue only had one bogey apiece in the second round, as both bogeyed the par-3 11th. The co-leaders both have 12 birdies through two rounds, tied for most in the field among those who completed their second round, with the only other player boasting a dozen birdies being Akshay Bhatia, who won the season-opening The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay.

Albertson, a 28-year-old who plays from Atlanta, Georgia, opened his second round with consecutive birdies at the par-4 first and second and closed with two more at the par-4 15th and par-5 18th. Albertson also birdied Nos. 1, 2, and 15 in Thursday's opening round.

"I played consistently today," Albertson said. "I think the biggest difference is that the greens were so fast yesterday afternoon, and then today I struggled with the speed to make putts. I hit 16 or 17 greens, so I had a lot of looks but I just didn't make as many putts, but that's going to happen sometimes. Hopefully tomorrow I'll be playing in the afternoon, because I had it dialed in yesterday and would like to fall back on that speed."

Albertson is back with the Korn Ferry Tour for the second consecutive season after he played the 2018-19 campaign on the PGA TOUR. The Georgia Tech alum finished No. 8 on the 2018 Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List and earned his first PGA TOUR card, but finished 172nd the 2018-19 FedExCup Standings and fell back to the Korn Ferry Tour. In the combined 2020-21 season, Albertson finished No. 64 on the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List, granting him fully exempt status for the 2022 season.

In eight Korn Ferry Tour starts this year, Albertson has six made cuts, highlighted by a T4 at the inaugural Lake Charles Championship.

"If I win a tournament, I win, and if I don't, I don't," said Albertson, whose only previous 36-hole lead on the Korn Ferry Tour was at the 2021 Veritex Bank Championship, where he was T1 through the second round and finished T20. "In the past I've thought in a way that made it difficult for me to play my best, and I think now I'm getting out of my own way because I'm not feeling all the extra stuff that comes with what every shot means.

"I just play the shot in front of me as freely as I can and stay kind to myself afterwards if it doesn't go well."

Daffue entered the day two strokes behind Albertson and pulled even with the 18-hole leader as he played his last six holes at 5-under par, highlighted by an eagle on the par-5 fifth.

"I've been hitting the ball really well this week and my proximity has been really close," stated Daffue, who also made birdies at Nos. 18, 4, 6, and 9. "I put a lot of work into my short game and doing certain drills to work speed with my putter. I'm putting it together with eight birdies yesterday, then four birdies and an eagle today. I'm trying to not get ahead of myself and hit the middle of the green then move forward."

Daffue turned professional out of Lamar University in 2012, but struggled to obtain status for the first seven years of his career. Daffue finished T138 at Final Stage of the 2017 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, leaving him buried in the priority ranking and for the 2018 season. His first Korn Ferry Tour start came in 2019 after he successfully Monday qualified. Daffue Monday qualified into five of his 10 career Korn Ferry Tour starts prior to the 2022 season, while another three were via top-25s following a successful Monday qualifier.

Daffue returned to Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament last November, but he finished T50 and missed the top 40 – which left him without guaranteed starts for the 2022 season – by a single stroke. After a battle with COVID in January, Daffue was the seventh-to-last player in the field at the season-opening The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, where he finished T15 and positioned himself to climb the priority ranking following the reorder.

In 10 starts this season, Daffue has three top-10s, including a T2 at the LECOM Suncoast Classic back in February. If the clubhouse lead stands, it will mark Daffue's first 36-hole lead or co-lead, and his second lead in a Korn Ferry Tour event, as he held the outright 18-hole lead at last month's Veritex Bank Championship.

"This isn't the first time that I'm tied for the lead this season, I've been in this position quite a few times so I'm getting used to it," Daffue said. "I'm trying to learn from my past experiences, I've seen myself be

patient and today is a great example. I've learned over the past tournaments this season where I was in contention that I don't have to do anything special to win. I need to stick to my routines and stay committed and then trust in my ability."

Third-round tee times will begin at 8:45 a.m. off the first and 10th tees.

Second-Round Notes

- **Eric Cole** (T3 / -9) sits T3 after 36 holes for the second time this season and in his career; he was previously T3 at the LECOM Suncoast Classic, where he finished T14
- Making his 217th Korn Ferry Tour start, **Rob Oppenheim** (T3 / -9) stands T3 or higher through 36 holes for the 10th time in his Korn Ferry Tour career; he is also in the top ten through 36 holes for the third time this season
 - Veritex Bank Championship – T9 after 36 holes (finished T4)
 - Astar Golf Championship presented by Mastercard – T4 after 36 holes (finished T5)
- **Akshay Bhatia** (T41 / -4) made a field-leading nine birdies en route to a 7-under 63 in the second round, moving him from T135 to T41 and inside the projected cutline
- Bhatia and **Brad Brunner** (T6 / -8) tied the lowest completed second round with 7-under 63s
- **Erik Barnes** (T18 / -6) projects to make his 12th consecutive cut and continue to be the only Korn Ferry Tour player with a made cut in every event this season
- The Visit Knoxville Open is the 12th 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

Cumulative Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total - Par 70): 69.233 [-0.767]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine - Par 35): 34.469 [-0.531]
- Scoring Average (Back Nine - Par 35): 34.764 [-0.236]
- Toughest Hole: No. 17, Par 4, 520 yards – 4.306 [+0.306]
- Easiest Hole: No. 5, Par 5, 614 yards – 4.550 [-0.450]