

Pre-Tournament Notes – Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard

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Dates: February 9-12, 2022

Where: Bogotá, Colombia

Host Course: Country Club de Bogotá – Lagos (Par 71 – 7,237 yards)

Course Designer: John Van Kleek (1946)

Satellite Course: Country Club de Bogotá – Pacos (Par 70 – 6,249 yards)

Course Designer: John Van Kleek (1948)

Format: 72-hole stroke play (156 players)

Purse: \$1,000,000 (\$180,000/winner)

Defending Champion: Brandon Matthews

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Things to Know

- The Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard, hosted by Country Club de Bogotá and being played for the 13th time, is the fourth tournament of the 26-event 2023 Korn Ferry Tour schedule
- Five of the top 10 finishers from the 2022 Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard earned PGA TOUR cards at season's end – Brandon Matthews (Winner), Ben Griffin (T2), Eric Cole (T7), Augusto Núñez (T7), MJ Daffue (T9) – while Ryan Brehm (T9) won the PGA TOUR's 2022 Puerto Rico Open on a minor medical extension roughly a month later and regained TOUR membership
- The top-five players from the PGA TOUR Latinoamérica 2021-22 Totalplay Cup are all exempt into the field for this week's event:
 - No. 1 **Mitchell Meissner** (United States) [also fully exempt for the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season]
 - No. 2 **Cristobal Del Solar** (Chile)
 - No. 3 **Jorge Fernández Valdés** (Argentina)
 - No. 4 **Kevin Velo** (United States)
 - No. 5 **Alejandro Tosti** (Argentina)
- This week's field includes 18 players from six different Latin American countries or territories:
 - Argentina (8) – **Martin Contini, Julián Etulain, Jorge Fernández Valdés, Abel Gallegos, Fabián Gómez, Nelson Ledesma, Alejandro Tosti, Alan Wagner**
 - Colombia (3) – **Camilo Villegas, Daniel Faccini, Daniel Zuluaga**
 - Mexico (3) – **Roberto Díaz, Emilio González, José de Jesús Rodríguez**
 - Chile (2) – **Cristobal Del Solar, Gabriel Morgan-Birke**
 - Ecuador (1) – **Juan Moncayo**
 - Puerto Rico (1) – **Rafael Campos**
- Patrick Cantlay, winner of the 2020-21 FedExCup, is the most notable past champion of the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard, having won the 2013 playing of the event
- Brandon Matthews won the 2022 Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard in thrilling fashion, posting an birdie-birdie-eagle finish for a one-stroke victory, which helped secure his first PGA TOUR card
- **Pierceson Coody** won last week's Panama Championship for his second victory in 14 career Korn Ferry Tour starts; he joined Scottie Scheffler, Kris Ventura, and Cameron Young as the only players since the start of 2019 to win twice within their first 20 Korn Ferry Tour starts
- A number of changes to the Korn Ferry Tour [announced this past June](#) will be implemented for the first time this season, with the most notable changes being:
 - **Increase from 25 to 30 PGA TOUR cards** annually awarded via the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
 - Reimagining of the Korn Ferry Tour Finals

- *Previous Finals System:* Three-event competition for 25 PGA TOUR cards between the top 75 from the Korn Ferry Tour Points List and Nos. 126-200 on the FedExCup standings
- **2023 and Beyond Finals System:** Final four events of the season where members will compete for increased purses and points (600 points for winning one of the four Finals events, compared to 500 for winning one of the 22 preceding events) to determine the season-long points race, in addition to a progressive reduction in field sizes
 - Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron (August 24-27) – 156 players
 - Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation (September 14-17) – 144 players
 - Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship (September 21-24) – 120 players
 - Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance (October 5-8) – 75 players [no cut]
- **One season-long Korn Ferry Tour Points List** as opposed to separate points lists for the regular season and Korn Ferry Tour Finals
- **Purses increasing** to \$1.5 million for the four Korn Ferry Tour Finals events and \$1 million for the 22 preceding events, with the \$28 million season purse representing the highest single-season total in Korn Ferry Tour history

Field Notes (as of 2/7/23)

- Field includes 42 past Korn Ferry Tour winners with 57 total wins, led by **Wesley Bryan** with three
- Field includes seven winners from the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour season – **Akshay Bhatia, Pierceson Coody, Brandon Harkins, David Kocher, Andrew Kozan, T.J. Vogel, Norman Xiong** – as well as all three winners from the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season – **Pierceson Coody, Chandler Phillips, Ben Silverman**
- **Mark Anderson** (2019) is the only past champion of the Astara Golf Championship in this week’s field
- Field includes nine past PGA TOUR winners with 16 total victories, led by **Camilo Villegas** with four
- Field includes four top-200 players from the Official World Golf Ranking: **Yuto Katsuragawa** (No. 129), **Kaito Oinishi** (No. 171), **Chan Kim** (No. 176) and **Sean Crocker** (No. 200)

2022 Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard Recap (February 10-13)

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Brandon Matthews	67	65	66	66	264 (-19)
T2	Ben Griffin	68	61	68	68	265 (-18)
	Ryan McCormick	61	69	69	66	265 (-18)
4	Joey Garber	69	64	64	69	266 (-17)

- Brandon Matthews, the 2020-21 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Totalplay Cup winner, followed his career-high finish (T2 at The Panama Championship) with his first Korn Ferry Tour win
- Playing in the penultimate group in the final round, Matthews birdied the par-4 16th and 17th, then hit a 9-iron to 5 feet and poured in an eagle putt on the par-5 18th; Ben Griffin’s potential tying eagle putt horseshoed out and left him one stroke behind Matthews
- Matthews recorded three top-10s in 2022 and eventually finished 10th on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List, earning his first PGA TOUR card
- Griffin held the outright 36-hole lead and co-led after 54 holes en route to his second of three runner-up finishes in 2022, which helped secure his first PGA TOUR card at season’s end
- A bogey-free 5-under 66 for **Ryan McCormick** capped a career-high finish in what was his 52nd career Korn Ferry Tour start; his previous career-high finish was T6 on three occasions, with the most recent coming last May at the 2021 AdventHealth Championship
- **Joey Garber** co-led after 54 holes and logged his second consecutive top-10, along with his highest finish on Tour since winning the 2018 UNC Health Championship presented by STITCH
- McCormick and Garber both narrowly missed out on PGA TOUR cards but were in the top 75 on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List, thus retaining fully exempt status for the 2023 season

Past Champions

Year	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	Margin
2022	Brandon Matthews	67	65	66	66	264 (-19)	1
2020	Mito Pereira	65	66	68	64	263 (-20)	2
2019	Mark Anderson	62	71	66	67	266 (-17)	4
2018	Ben Taylor	67	66	68	68	269 (-15)	6
2017	Ethan Tracy	69	69	68	65	271 (-13)	Playoff
2016	Sebastián Muñoz	69	66	66	71	272 (-12)	1
2015	Patrick Rodgers	69	67	66	65	267 (-17)	Playoff
2014	Alex Cejka	68	68	63	--	199 (-14)	3
2013	Patrick Cantlay	67	68	65	66	266 (-18)	4
2012	Skip Kendall	70	67	66	71	274 (-10)	1
2011	Brenden Pappas	67	66	---	--	133 (-9)	1
2010	Steve Pate	70	66	66	71	273 (-11)	Playoff

Host Course Information – Country Club de Bogota (Lagos)

- Years Hosted: 2010-Present
- Scoring Average (2022): 70.228 / -0.772
- Toughest Hole (2022): No. 2, Par 4, 525 yards – 4.242 / +0.242
- Easiest Hole (2022): No. 10, Par 5, 585 yards – 4.515 / -0.485
- Course Record: 62, Taylor Montgomery (2022, Round 3)

Satellite Course Information – Country Club de Bogota (Pacos)

- Years Played: 2019-Present
- Scoring Average (2022): 68.033 / -1.967
- Toughest Hole (2022): No. 18, Par 4, 485 yards – 4.323 / +0.323
- Easiest Hole (2022): No. 7, Par 5, 516 yards – 4.323 / -0.677
- Course Record: 61, six times – **Ryan McCormick** (2022, Round 1), Trevor Werbylo (2022, Round 1), Ben Griffin (2022, Round 2), James Nicholas (2022, Round 2), Doug Ghim (2019, Round 2), **Xinjun Zhang** (2019, Round 1)

Tournament Scoring Records

- Low 18-Hole Score: 61, six times – **Ryan McCormick** (2022, Round 1, Pacos), Trevor Werbylo (2022, Round 1, Pacos), Ben Griffin (2022, Round 2, Pacos), James Nicholas (2022, Round 2, Pacos), Doug Ghim (2019, Round 2, Pacos), **Xinjun Zhang** (2019, Round 1, Pacos)
- Low 36-Hole Score: 129, Ben Griffin (2022), **John VanDerLaan** and **Camilo Villegas** (2020)
- Low 54-Hole Score: 195, **John VanDerLaan** (2020)
- Low 72-Hole Score: 263, Mito Pereira (2020)
- Largest Margin of Victory: 6, Ben Taylor (2018)

Last Week on Tour – The Panama Championship (February 2-5)

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Pierceson Coody *	72	68	71	66	277 (-3)
T2	Mac Meissner	71	65	73	68	277 (-3)
	Sam Saunders	74	68	68	67	277 (-3)
T4	Wil Bateman	71	68	70	69	278 (-2)
	Joe Highsmith	70	71	67	70	278 (-2)

* won with birdie on first hole (No. 18) of sudden-death playoff

- **Pierceson Coody** played the final 27 holes of regulation at 6-under par, including a 4-under 66 in the final round, which earned him a spot in a three-man playoff

- Coody became the seventh player in Korn Ferry Tour history to win a 72-hole Korn Ferry Tour event with a winning score of 3-under par or higher
- Coody entered the final round in T24 position and became the first player since Seth Reeves (T27 through 54 holes of 2020 Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna) who began the final round outside the top 15 and won the tournament
- **Mac Meissner**, a second-year Korn Ferry Tour member, recorded the highest finish of his career, topping a pair of T5s from last season (NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank, Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna); he finished No. 46 on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- **Sam Saunders** recorded his fourth runner-up finish in PGA TOUR-sanctioned play, and third runner-up on the Korn Ferry Tour (T2 at 2017 Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance, T2 at 2015 Puerto Rico Open [PGA TOUR], T2 at 2012 Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank)
- **Wil Bateman**, a second-year Korn Ferry Tour member and winner of the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada Fortinet Cup, recorded his second T4 finish in his third start of the season; his best finish in three Korn Ferry Tour starts prior to the 2023 season was T18 at the 2022 Veritex Bank Championship
- Four players who finished T8 or higher this week were top-40 finishers at Final Stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament: **Joe Highsmith** (T24 at Final Stage), **Paul Peterson** (T6 / -1; T8 at Final Stage), **Rico Hoey** (T8 / E; T18 at Final Stage), **Carter Jenkins** (T8 / E; T39 at Final Stage)
- Highsmith, a Korn Ferry Tour rookie who finished No. 9 in the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada Fortinet Cup following a No. 10 finish on the 2022 PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking, recorded his second consecutive top-15 and has not finished lower than T31 in the first three events this season

Players to Watch in 2023

1. **Chris Gotterup** – The 2022 Haskins and Jack Nicklaus Award winner has made 12 PGA TOUR starts since March 2022, making nine cuts; he finished No. 7 in the 2022 PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking, but earned enough non-member FedExCup points to compete in the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Finals and finished T3 at Final Stage of Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament for guaranteed starts in the first 12 events of the 2023 season
2. **Pierceson Coody** – Joined the Korn Ferry Tour after a No. 1 finish in the 2022 PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking, won his third start, and finished No. 32 on the points list despite only playing eight events prior to the Korn Ferry Tour Finals
3. **Akshay Bhatia** – Won the season-opening event but went without a top-10 the rest of the season and finished No. 30 on last year's points list; he made two PGA TOUR starts in the fall, making both cuts and finishing T17 at the Butterfield Bermuda Championship
4. **Norman Xiong** – Captured his first Korn Ferry Tour win last year despite not having membership, as he open qualified into the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open Benefiting KU Wichita Pediatrics and posted the second-lowest 72-hole score in Tour history (26-under 254) for a five-shot win
5. **Mitchell Meissner** – No. 1 finisher in the 2021-22 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Totalplay Cup, awarding him fully exempt status for the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season; he recorded three runner-ups and a pair of T3s in 12 starts last season on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica
6. **Wil Bateman** – No. 1 finisher in the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada Fortinet Cup off the strength of two victories, earning fully exempt status for the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season
7. **Frankie Capan III** – Turned professional out of Florida Gulf Coast University last summer and advanced through every stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, including pre-qualifying, and earned 12 guaranteed starts with a top-10 finish at Final Stage
8. **Willie Mack III** – Overcame a number of unfortunate events while playing his way through the mini-tours and APGA Tour, finally breaking through at Final Stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament (finished T12) to earn guaranteed starts in the first eight events of 2023
9. **Kevin Dougherty** – Finished in the top 75 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List for a fourth consecutive season in 2022 with four top-10s, retaining fully exempt status for 2023
10. **Jeremy Paul** – Earned fully exempt status for the first time with a No. 37 finish on last season's Korn Ferry Tour Points List; his twin brother, Yannik, won on the DP World Tour this past October