



**2023 HomeTown Lenders Championship**  
**(9th of 26 events on 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Schedule)**  
[Tournament Media Site](#) | [Interview Transcripts](#)

Huntsville, Alabama  
 The Ledges

April 27-30, 2023  
 Par / Yards: 35-35—70 / 7,114

Points: 500 (winner)  
 Purse: \$1,000,000 / \$180,000 (winner)

**Partial First-Round Notes – Friday, April 28, 2023**

The first round started at 10:25 a.m. CT after play was suspended all day Thursday, followed by a four-hour fog delay Friday morning. The first round was suspended Friday evening at 7:32 p.m. due to darkness and is scheduled to resume at 6:45 a.m. Saturday. Second-round tee-times will run from 9:10 a.m. through 4:57 p.m. local time off the first and 10th tees.

Weather: Foggy morning conditions, partly cloudy in the afternoon with a high of 71. Wind SW 5-12 mph, gusts up to 18 mph.

**First-Round Leaderboard**

Spencer Levin	65 (-5)
Taylor Dickson	65 (-5)
Jake Knapp	5-under thru 12
Pontus Nyholm	5-under thru 12
Three players tied	66 (-4)

**Things to Know**

- Four players are tied atop the leaderboard, including two players who have yet to complete the first round
- 2023 Veritex Bank Championship winner Spencer Levin and third-year Korn Ferry Tour member Taylor Dickson finished the first round with matching 5-under 65s
- Jake Knapp and Pontus Nyholm both sit at 5-under through 12 holes and will resume the first round Saturday morning
- Making his first start in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event, Monday qualifier Michael Sweeney recorded a hole-in-one on his fourth hole of the day at the 230-yard par-3 13th
- Per Korn Ferry Tour Rules and Regulations, the 2023 HomeTown Lenders Championship has been reduced to a 54-hole tournament; dating back to 2000, this will be the 15th Korn Ferry Tour event reduced to 54 holes, including three which were eventually reduced to 36 holes

**First-Round Lead Notes**

- 1 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win HomeTown Lenders Championship (2022: Harrison Endycott, T1)
- 0 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win on Tour in 2023 (last: David Lingmerth/2022 Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship)

**Charting the Co-leaders (stats entering the week)**

Category	Spencer Levin	Taylor Dickson	Jake Knapp	Pontus Nyholm
Age	38 (June 15, 1984)	30 (Oct. 7, 1992)	28 (May 31, 1994)	25 (Feb. 10, 1998)
2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List	No. 12	No. 54	No. 18	No. 44
Starts – wins – top-10s on Korn Ferry Tour (2023)	5-1-1	5-0-1	7-0-1	8-0-0
Starts – wins – top-10s on Korn Ferry Tour (Career)	100-1-12	58-0-6	43-0-4	33-0-1
Starts – wins – top-10s at HomeTown Lenders Championship	0-0-0	2-0-1	1-0-0	1-0-0

### **Spencer Levin (T1/-5)**

- Carded a first-round bogey-free 5-under 65; rolled in birdies at two par 5s (Nos. 4, 10) and three par 4s (7, 16, 17)
- Entered this week No. 12 on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Won the Veritex Bank Championship earlier this month in what was his 343rd career start in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event; Levin, who Monday qualified into the event after having conditional status to begin the season, entered the final round five shots off the lead and went on to card a bogey-free 8-under 63 to claim a one-stroke victory over 54-hole leader Brett Drewitt
- Turned professional in 2005 and has made 244 starts on the PGA TOUR and 100 on the Korn Ferry Tour
- On the amateur circuit, Levin won the 2003 Azalea Invitational, with Webb Simpson succeeding him as champion a year later, the 2004 Porter Cup, an event previously won by David Duval (1992), Scott Verplank (1985), and Ben Crenshaw (1972), as well as the 2004 California State Amateur Championship, which listed Jason Gore (1997), Mark O'Meara (1979), Johnny Miller (1968), and Ken Venturi (1951 and 1956) among its past champions
- The son of a former PGA TOUR player, Levin spent a season at UCLA before he transferred to University of New Mexico, where he was a two-time All-American, including a first-team selection in 2004-05, and broke numerous school records

### **Taylor Dickson (T1/-5)**

- Rolled in a 12-foot birdie on his final hole of the day to reach 5-under par and claim a share of the lead; tallied six birdies against just one bogey in the first round
- Has finished inside the top 15 in each of the past two playings of the HomeTown Lenders Championship (T9 in 2022 and T11 in 2021)
- Dickson is making his sixth start of the season this week; he has two top-25 finishes this year, with his highest finish being a T7 at the Veritex Bank Championship two weeks ago
- In his third season on the Korn Ferry Tour, Dickson has made 59 career starts on the Tour and logged six top 10s, highlighted by matching solo third place finishes at the 2021 Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper and the 2021 NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank
- A native of Gastonia, North Carolina, Dickson played collegiately at Winthrop University from 2011-15

### **Jake Knapp (T1/-5)**

- Playing out of the Friday afternoon wave, only completed 12 holes of his first round prior to the suspension due to darkness; recorded five total birdies Friday, highlighted by three consecutive on Nos. 4-6; the two remaining birdies came at the par-4 first and par-5 10<sup>th</sup>
- Has a streak of 19 consecutive rounds with scores under par entering this week; only three rounds over par in 26 total rounds played this season
- Entering this week fresh off the best finish of his Korn Ferry Tour career, T5 at last week's LECOM Suncoast Classic
- Currently sits 18th on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List; has made seven starts this season and finished inside the top 25 five times, with three top 10s
- Last year, played on PGA TOUR Canada where he ended the year No. 2 on the final Fortinet Cup Standings; logged four top-10 finishes in 10 starts, including a win at the CRMC Championship presented by Gertens
- Prior to joining the Korn Ferry Tour for the 2020-21 season, played primarily on PGA TOUR Canada where he made 36 starts from 2016-19, highlighted by his 2019 season that included five top-10 finishes and two wins in 12 starts

### **Pontus Nyholm (T1/-5)**

- Only completed 12 holes Friday prior to the first round being suspended due to darkness
- In 12 holes played, recorded six birdies (Nos. 4, 5, 8, 10-12) against just one bogey at the par-4 seventh
- Has started all eight events this season and logged three top-25 finishes, highlighted by a T14 at The Panama Championship
- Entered this week No. 44 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- A Sweden native who played collegiately at Campbell University before turning professional in 2021
- First earned Korn Ferry Tour membership ahead of 2022 season via a T29 finish at Final Stage of the 2021 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament
- Recorded five top-25s in 24 starts in 2022, highlighted by a runner-up finish at the Veritex Bank Championship and finished No. 50 in the standings to maintain membership for 2023

## Quotables

**Spencer Levin** on the mindset only playing 54 holes... "I feel like every week it seems to be on this tour that with four rounds you've got to be somewhere around 20 under par or better. So I don't know what it's going to be through three rounds, but if you do the math, I think probably 15 is going to have a good chance just based on what normal scores are out here. I think if you can get it to that or better, you're going to have a chance. That's just what it seems to be every week, so we'll see."

**Taylor Dickson** on the challenges of playing after lengthy delays... "It's out of our control, so you just wait around. You've just got to be patient. There's just nothing you can do about it. Whenever they say go play, just be ready to go play. We were today, so hopefully we'll be ready tomorrow."

**Michael Sweeney** on his hole-in-one... "Well, I was a little salty because I just missed a six-footer for birdie on the hole before, so I was really trying to hit good golf shots, try and make up for it. Then as to how it went in or why it went in, I don't know the answer, but it did. A little slam dunk 4-iron never hurt anybody. After that, I just tried to focus on the next golf shot and try to keep the mind from racing as much as possible."

## Notes

- Making the 100th start of his Korn Ferry Tour career, **Michael Johnson** (T5/-4), a Birmingham native and Auburn alum, carded a 4-under 66 via five birdies and one bogey; Johnson placed T35 in this event last year and T54 in the 2021 inaugural playing
- **Paul Peterson** (T5/-4) led all players with seven birdies Friday; Peterson birdied all three par 5s (Nos. 4, 8, 10), three par 4s (Nos. 12, 16, 17) and the par-3 11th.
- **Carter Jenkins** (T5/-4) rolled in six birdies against two bogeys and is in position to set a career-high 18-hole position (previous best was T10 at the season-opening The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club)
- Auburn alum **Andrew Kozan** (T8/-3) carded a 3-under 67 via four birdies, one eagle and three bogeys
- **Paul Barjon** (T38/-1), winner of the 2021 HomeTown Lenders Championship, rolled in two birdies against just one bogey for a first-round 1-under 69
- Monday qualifier **Michael Sweeney** (T38/-1) recorded a hole-in-one at the 230-yard par-3 13th Thursday; he finished 1-under par with three birdies, one eagle, two bogeys and one double bogey
  - Sweeney is making his first start in a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event this week; a 26-year-old who lives in Port St. Lucie, Florida but plays from Enfield, Connecticut, Sweeney notably spent [four months living out of his car](#) in the summer of 2021 while pursuing a golf career; while this week marks his first start in a TOUR-sanctioned event, Sweeney recently secured PGA TOUR Canada membership by placing solo 10th in a PGA TOUR Canada Qualifying event in February