



2023 Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance
(26th of 26 events on 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Schedule)

[Tournament Media Site](#) | [Interview Transcripts](#)

Newburgh, Indiana
Victoria National Golf Club

October 5-8, 2023
Par / Yards: 72 / 7,265

Points: 600 (winner)
Purse: \$1,500,000 / \$270,000 (winner)

First-Round Notes – Thursday, October 5, 2023

First-Round Leaderboard

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Mason Andersen | 64 (-8) |
| David Kocher | 67 (-5) |
| Ben Kohles | 68 (-4) |
| Dimi Papadatos | 68 (-4) |
| Five Players Tied | 69 (-3) |

Things to Know

- Rookie **Mason Andersen** cards bogey-free 8-under 64, one of two bogey-free rounds Thursday (**Ben Kohles**/68)
- Andersen’s three-stroke lead marks the largest 18-hole lead on the Korn Ferry Tour this season, and the largest at any Tour event since the 2022 Nationwide Children’s Hospital Championship (David Lingmerth/three strokes/won)
- Andersen entered the week at No. 42 on Korn Ferry Tour Points List, currently projects to rise to No. 8 with a win
- **David Kocher**, currently No. 51 on Korn Ferry Tour Points List, opens in 5-under 67, sits three strokes off the lead in solo second and projects to move to No. 18 on Points List
- Andersen, Kocher, and **Matt McCarty** (T5/-3) are the only three players currently projected to move into the top 30 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List; the three players currently projected to fall out of the top 30 are No. 26 **Carter Jenkins** (73rd/+12), No. 27 **Joe Highsmith** (T34/+1), and No. 30 **Jackson Suber** (T52/+4)
- Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance is the 26th and final event of the 2023 season, and the top 30 players on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List upon conclusion of the final round will earn PGA TOUR membership for the 2024 season
- Upon conclusion of the final round, players ranked Nos. 31-60 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List will earn an exemption to Final Stage of PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry, where 2024 PGA TOUR membership will be awarded to the top five finishers and ties
- Second-round tee times will run from 7:38 a.m. through 9:39 a.m. local time off the first and 10th tees

First-Round Lead Notes

- 5 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win Korn Ferry Tour Championship (Last: Justin Bolli/2012)
- 3 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win on Tour in 2023 (Nicholas Lindheim/The Ascendant presented by Blue; Pierceson Coody/Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper; Alejandro Tosti/Pinnacle Bank Championship presented by Aetna)

Charting the Leader (stats entering the week)

| Category | Mason Andersen |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Age | 24 (November 23, 1998) |
| 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List | No. 42 |
| Korn Ferry Tour Starts – Wins – Top-10s (2023) | 25-0-3 |
| Korn Ferry Tour Starts – Wins – Top-10s (Career) | 25-0-3 |
| Starts – Wins – Top-10s at Korn Ferry Tour Championship | 0-0-0 |

Mason Andersen (1st/-8)

- Opens with bogey-free 8-under 64 to claim the first 18-hole lead in 26th career start on Tour
- Previous career-high 18-hole position was T2/Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open (finished T12)

- Cards eight birdies (in order): par-5 10th, par-4 13th, par-5 15th, par-3 16th, par-4 18th, par-4 2nd and 4th, par-5 9th
- Beats the Round 1 field scoring average (73.23) by 9.23 strokes
- Posts fifth round of 64 or better and his third-lowest round relative to par this season (9-under 61/Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open/Round 4; 9-under 63/Astara Chile Classic/Round 2)
- Rookie who entered the week at No. 42 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List; he projects to rise to No. 8 with a win
- Played every event this season, posting career- and season-high finish of T2 at the Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation, the second of four Korn Ferry Tour Finals events
- Recorded one of his three top-10s this season at the Astara Chile Classic, where he held the 36-hole lead and 54-hole co-lead prior to a T7 finish
- Entered the week with consecutive top-25s (T2/Simmons Bank Open; T18/Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship), which took him from No. 57 to No. 42 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Turned professional in summer 2022 following five seasons at Arizona State University, where he twice earned medalist honors, garnered 2022 All-America Third Team recognition, earned a 2019 All-Pac-12 Conference First Team selection, and went 3-0 in match play as Arizona State finished runner-up at the 2022 NCAA Championships
- Finished T12 at Final Stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament for guaranteed starts in the first eight events of the 2023 season; he was one of eight players who advanced through each stage of the Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament, beginning with pre-qualifying
- Qualified for and played the 2017 U.S. Open as an amateur

David Kocher (2nd/-5)

- Cards seven birdies – tied for second-most in the field – and two bogeys en route to 5-under 67
- Entered the week at No. 51 on Korn Ferry Tour Points List, currently projects to move to No. 18 with a solo second
- Posted season-high finish of solo second at the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron, where he carded a final-round 12-under 59, the [10th sub-60 round in Korn Ferry Tour history](#)
- Two-time winner on the Korn Ferry Tour with victories at the 2022 Price Cutter Charity Championship presented by Dr Pepper (broke 72-hole tournament scoring record en route to [six-stroke win](#)), and 2020 El Bosque Mexico Championship by INNOVA ([won sixth career start in playoff](#), also final event prior to COVID-19 pandemic hiatus)
- Top-40 finisher on Korn Ferry Tour Points List the last two seasons (No. 37 in 2020-21, No. 35 in 2022)
- Earned Korn Ferry Tour membership for first time via No. 3 finish on 2019 PGA TOUR Series – China Order of Merit, largely off strength of a win at the 2019 Haikou Championship
- 27-year-old from Morristown, New Jersey now residing in and playing from Charlotte, North Carolina
- Turned professional in 2018 after four seasons at University of Maryland (2014-18), where he won twice individually and garnered All-Big Ten Conference First Team recognition in 2016

Quotables

Mason Andersen on playing through the rain Thursday... “my caddie and I were having a great time, smiling and laughing. I think if you get down in the dumps early about the weather, it's pretty tough to enjoy yourself, hit good shots. It really affects you mentally. We were having a good time just playing in the rain.”

Andersen on his rookie season on Tour... “If you asked me a year ago where I was going to be, I probably would have said, you know, dinking around on a certain tour but not contending (at) the Korn Ferry Tour Championship. Yeah, I've exceeded my expectations and I'm just super excited. I felt like all year I played pretty consistently. I had a rough stretch in the middle of the season, but a few really nice tournaments, Kansas City and Nashville where I'm like, ‘Oh, I can do this.’”

Notes

- **Ben Kohles** (T3/-4) entered the week at No. 1 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List and currently projects to finish No. 1 – which would award him exemptions for the 2024 PLAYERS Championship and 2024 U.S. Open
- **Alejandro Tosti** (T5/-3), who entered the week at No. 5 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List with nine top-10s (tied for the most on Tour this season), is one of six players in the field mathematically able to finish No. 1 on the Points List; he can only potentially move to No. 1 with a win
- **Dimi Papadatos** (T3/-4), a four-time winner on PGA Tour of Australasia and winner on the Challenge Tour, can only move into the top 30 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List with a win; he holds his highest 18-hole position of the season (previous: T6/Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron/finished T43; T6/Astara Chile Classic/finished 2nd)
- **Shad Tuten** (T5/-3) entered the week at No. 29 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List and currently projects to move to No. 21
- **Matt McCarty** (T5/-3) birdies his final four holes (and five of his last six holes) en route to 3-under 69; he is one of three players currently projected to move into the top 30 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List (No. 37 to No. 30)