



**2023 Simmons Bank Open**  
*(24th of 26 events on 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Schedule)*  
[Tournament Media Site](#) | [Interview Transcripts](#)

<b>College Grove, Tennessee</b>	<b>September 14-17, 2023</b>	<b>Points: 600 (winner)</b>
<b>The Grove</b>	<b>Par / Yards: 72 / 7,440</b>	<b>Purse: \$1,500,000 / \$270,000 (winner)</b>

**First-Round Notes – Thursday, September 14, 2023**

**[First-Round Leaderboard](#)**

Scott Stevens	66 (-6)
Patrick Welch	66 (-6)
Four players tied	67 (-5)

**Things to Know**

- Korn Ferry Tour rookies **Scott Stevens** and **Patrick Welch** share the 18-hole lead after a first-round 6-under 66, marking the first lead/co-lead of any kind for both players on Tour
- As the last man in the field, Stevens sits inside the top 10 for the first time this season after entering the week No. 159 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- In his 12th start on Tour, Welch, who finished No. 8 on the 2023 PGA TOUR University Ranking, secures the best 18-hole position of his young career
- Second-round tee times will run from 6:35 a.m. through 1:45 p.m. local time off the first and 10th tees
- Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation is the second of four events in the season-ending Korn Ferry Tour Finals

**First-Round Lead Notes**

- 2 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win Simmons Bank Open (Austin Smotherman/2020; Robby Shelton/2019)
- 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	Scott Stevens	Patrick Welch
Age	26 (Oct. 21, 1996)	23
2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List	No. 159	No. 75
Korn Ferry Tour Starts – Wins – Top-10s (2023)	20-0-0	11-0-1
Korn Ferry Tour Starts – Wins – Top-10s (Career)	26-0-0	11-0-1

**Scott Stevens (T1/-6)**

- In his rookie season on the Korn Ferry Tour, holds his first lead/co-lead of any kind in his 27th start on Tour; previous career-high 18-hole position was T19/2023 AdventHealth Championship (finished T22)
- Last man in the field for the Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation, entering the week No. 159 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Carded a field-leading eight birdies (Nos. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14) against one double bogey at the par-4 17th
- Making 27th career Korn Ferry Tour start (21st of the season); his career-high finish is T16/2021 Visit Knoxville Open
- Earned conditional Korn Ferry Tour membership for the 2023 season with No. 4 finish on the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada Fortinet Cup standings off the strength of a win and three top-10s in 10 starts
- Played four seasons at University of South Carolina (2015-19) prior to turning professional
- In 20 starts on Tour this season, has made eight cuts, highlighted by a T22 at the AdventHealth Championship

## Patrick Welch (T1/-6)

- Making 12th Korn Ferry Tour start, cards seven birdies against one bogey Thursday to hold his first 18-hole lead/co-lead on Tour
  - All seven birdies came at par 4s (Nos. 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17) with the bogey at the par-3 15th
- Finished No. 8 in the 2023 PGA TOUR University Ranking, earning Korn Ferry Tour membership for the remainder of the 2023 season
- In his 11 starts this season, made nine cuts highlighted by a T3 at last month's Magnit Championship
- Stands No.75 on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Played five years at the University of Oklahoma before turning professional in May
- Decorated college player and became the second player in OU history to be a four-time All-American honoree

## Quotables

**Scott Stevens** on getting into the field this week and sharing the 18-hole lead... "Yeah, it was a great day. And honestly, I mean, God is so good, just even for me to be here. I thought my season was over and a lot did have to happen for me to get in, so just the opportunity to play this week has been awesome. A course that I've played before and a course that I love.

"It was an awesome day. It wasn't the prettiest at times. I made a ton of putts, my putter bailed me out quite a bit, and I got some good breaks. But I had my buddy on the bag from South Carolina and it was just a lot of fun out there."

**Stevens** on what the key was to a good first round... "I feel like I put in some good work during the couple weeks I had off, changed some things in my swing that I saw had kind of gotten off. I feel like I did a good job of just staying calm and trying to have fun out there, which is a lot easier said than done sometimes. I got off to a good start, which helped a ton, and I was putting good, so that definitely helped.

"Like getting off to a good start was huge because I kind of feed off the momentum and kind of forgot about everything else once I started playing well and I was just back out there playing golf again, which felt good."

**Patrick Welch** on his 6-under 66... "I just birdied the first hole, got off to a good start. I think a couple holes in like I was making really good putts, so I just kind of figured just keep hitting greens and keep giving myself chances. I was lucky and fortunate enough to make a few coming down the back nine, especially after the bogey on 14. Overall, it was pretty solid all around."

**Welch** on earning Korn Ferry Tour starts... "It was funny because my whole summer schedule I was supposed to be up at PGA TOUR Canada. I was fortunate enough to get into the BMW in South Carolina and I was super excited. Played well the first day and not so great the second, missed the cut. I just kind of felt hopeless in a way knowing I really wanted to keep staying on this tour and keep getting more events under my belt. Again, thank you, Adrien. Since that happened, it kind of bumped me into like the last spot. And then Ricky won, so the guy behind me got in. So everyone's been playing pretty well. Just extremely fortunate, and I've just tried to do my best."

## Notes

- **Max Greyserman** (T3/-5), who stands No. 10 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, is in the top 10 after 18 holes for the seventh time this season
- 18-hole co-leader of the 2022 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation **Quade Cummins** (T3/-5) cards six birdies against one bogey for 5-under 67, earning his best 18-hole position of the season (previous: T9/NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank/finished T35)
- **Tom Whitney** (T3/-5), who stands No. 16 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, is inside the top 10 for the fourth time this season
- **Taylor Dickson** (T3/-5) who stands No. 34 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, is inside the top 10 for the seventh time this season
- Five players carded bogey-free rounds on Thursday: Greyserman, **Patrick Cover** (T7/-4), **Matt McCarty** (T16/-3), **Spencer Ralston** (T16/-3), and **Mason Andersen** (T44/-1)