

Pre-Tournament Notes – The Ascendant presented by Blue

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Dates: July 13-16, 2023

Where: Berthoud, Colorado

Course: TPC Colorado (Par 72 / 8,029 yards)

Course Designer: Art Schaupeter (2018)

Format: 72-hole stroke play

Field: 156 players

Purse / Winner's Share: \$1,000,000 / \$180,000 winner

Defending Champion: Zecheng Dou

Quick Links

- [Tournament Media Site](#) (for tee times, transcripts, media hub access)
- [2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List](#) (Top 30 earn PGA TOUR cards at end of season)
- [PGA TOUR University Class of 2023](#)
- [Five Things to Know: 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Season](#)

Things to Know

- The Korn Ferry Tour returns to Berthoud, Colorado for the fifth playing of The Ascendant presented by Blue, the 17th tournament on the 26-event 2023 schedule
- TPC Colorado, host of every iteration of The Ascendant presented by Blue since the inaugural playing in 2019, is the longest course in Korn Ferry Tour history at 8,029 yards (34 yards longer than last year), and its 773-yard par-5 13th is the longest hole in Tour history and PGA TOUR-sanctioned tournament play
- Reigning champion Zecheng Dou broke the 72-hole tournament scoring record and won last year's event at 17-under 271; Dou won by one stroke over compatriot Carl Yuan, who led the Korn Ferry Tour Points List much of last season
- Two past champions of The Ascendant presented by Blue are in the field this week – **Nelson Ledesma** (2019) and **Tag Ridings** (2021)
- Will Zalatoris won the 2020 The Ascendant presented by Blue for his first PGA TOUR-sanctioned win, which propelled him to the No. 1 spot on the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour Points List; he led the points list following the conclusion of the next 13 events, despite the fact his last Korn Ferry Tour start was September 2020
- Nine of the 12 players who finished T10 or better in last year's event earned a PGA TOUR card at season's end: Zecheng Dou (1st), Carl Yuan (2nd), Brandon Matthews (T3), Augusto Núñez (T3), MJ Daffue (T6), Davis Thompson (T6), Harrison Endycott (9th), Kevin Roy (T10), Justin Suh (T10)
- The top returners this week from last year's leaderboard are University of Colorado alum **Jeremy Paul** (T3) and **Shad Tuten** (T6)
- Korn Ferry Tour members in the field with ties to the state of Colorado include **Sam Saunders** (plays from Fort Collins) and sponsor exemption **Jake Staiano** (Englewood native and resident)
- Three members in the field played collegiately in Colorado: **Jeremy Paul** (University of Colorado), **Jake Staiano** (Colorado State University), **Tom Whitney** (United States Air Force Academy)
- **Tom Whitney** enters the week at No. 7 on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List and coming off his third top-three finish of the season; he entered 2023 with one top-three finish in 94 previous starts on Tour

Field Notes (as of 7/11/2023)

- 46 of the top 60 players on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List headline this week's field
- 13 champions from the first 16 events of the 2023 season are in this week's field:
 - **Paul Barjon, Ricky Castillo, Pierceson Coody, Adrien Dumont de Chassart, Jorge Fernández Valdés, Rhein Gibson, Scott Gutschewski, Rico Hoey, Spencer Levin, Chandler Phillips, Ben Silverman, David Skinns, Jimmy Stanger**

- Field includes 43 Korn Ferry Tour winners with 60 total victories, led by current Korn Ferry Tour Points List leader **Scott Gutschewski** and **David Skinnis** with three apiece
- Field includes six PGA TOUR winners with 16 total victories, led by **Camilo Villegas** with four
- Field includes five players inside top 200 of the Official World Golf Ranking: **Rico Hoey** (No. 145), **Pierceson Coody** (No. 156), **Alejandro Tosti** (No. 181), **Yuto Katsuragawa** (No. 182), **Ben Silverman** (No. 188)

PGA TOUR University Class of 2023

- Seven of the top 10 finishers from the 2023 PGA TOUR University Ranking are in the field this week:
 - No. 2 **Fred Biondi** (Florida) – won individual and team national titles at 2023 NCAA Championship
 - No. 3 **Adrien Dumont de Chassart** (Illinois) – *won professional and Korn Ferry Tour debut in June*
 - No. 6 **William Mouw** (Pepperdine)
 - No. 7 **Ryan Burnett** (North Carolina)
 - No. 8 **Patrick Welch** (Oklahoma)
 - No. 9 **Ricky Castillo** (Florida) – *won professional and Korn Ferry Tour debut in June*
 - No. 10 **Yuxin Lin** (Florida)
- The top five finishers from the 2023 PGA TOUR University Ranking earned fully exempt status on the Korn Ferry Tour through the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Finals (which grants entry to its field based off the Korn Ferry Tour Points List), as well as an exemption to Final Stage of 2023 PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry – where the top five finishers and ties earn PGA TOUR cards – and the ability to accept unlimited PGA TOUR sponsor exemptions for the remainder of 2023 and 2024
- Finishers Nos. 6-10 from the 2023 PGA TOUR University Ranking earned conditional status for the remainder of the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season, as well as fully exempt status for the 2023 PGA TOUR Canada season, an exemption to Second Stage of 2023 PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry, and exempt status through the Latin America Swing of the 2024 PGA TOUR Americas season
- For all events prior to the Korn Ferry Tour Finals, the PGA TOUR University category on the Korn Ferry Tour Priority Ranking will be filled by five players to a floor of the No. 10 finisher from the 2023 PGA TOUR University Priority Ranking
 - *Example:* No. 3 Adrien Dumont de Chassart and No. 9 Ricky Castillo now play out of the Tournament Winners category, meaning their places in the PGA TOUR University category will be filled by No. 6 William Mouw and No. 7 Ryan Burnett, respectively
 - *Additional Example:* If No. 2 Fred Biondi records a top-25, he plays the next tournament out of the “Top-25 Previous Event” category, meaning his place in the PGA TOUR University category would be filled by No. 8 Patrick Welch (since Nos. 6 and 7 will already be in field via previous example)
- **William Mouw** has top-25s in each of his last three Korn Ferry Tour starts, as well as a T13 at last week’s John Deere Classic on the PGA TOUR

2023 Korn Ferry Tour Season

- 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

2022 The Ascendant presented by Blue (June 30-July 3, 2022)

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Zecheng Dou	69	67	68	67	271 (-17)
2	Carl Yuan	71	70	64	67	272 (-16)
T3	Brandon Matthews	70	67	68	68	273 (-15)
	Augusto Núñez	66	70	69	68	273 (-15)
	Jeremy Paul	67	71	69	66	273 (-15)

- Zecheng Dou earned his third career Korn Ferry Tour victory (first since 2019) and secured a return to the PGA TOUR, as he previously graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour as a rookie in 2017
- Carl Yuan posted his third runner-up finish of the season, all of which (along with a win) propelled him to his first PGA TOUR card at season's end
- **Jeremy Paul** posted a career-high finish, topping his previous best of T5 from the 2022 Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation; he carded the most eagles in the field with three (par-4 18th in Round 1, par-5 fifth in Round 2, par-5 fifth in Round 4)
- **Justin Suh** (T10/-12), who eventually finished the year ranked No. 1 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, and **MJ Daffue** (T6/-14) led the field with 24 birdies apiece

Past Champions

Year	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	Margin
2022	Zecheng Dou	69	67	68	67	271 (-17)	1
2021	Tag Ridings	70	68	66	68	272 (-16)	Playoff
2020	Will Zalatoris	67	67	70	69	273 (-15)	1
2019	Nelson Ledesma	65	69	69	70	273 (-15)	1

Course Information – TPC Colorado

- Years Hosted: 2019-Present

Tournament Scoring Records

- Low 18-Hole Score: 63, Chase Johnson (2020, Round 4), Greyson Sigg (2020, Round 4), Taylor Moore (2021, Round 1)
- Low 36-Hole Score: 131, Tyson Alexander (2021)
- Low 54-Hole Score: 202, Taylor Moore and Tyson Alexander (2021)
- Low 72-Hole Score: 271, Zecheng Dou (2022)

Last Time on Tour – Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS Recap (June 29-July 2)

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Paul Barjon	65	62	66	65	258 (-26)
2	Jackson Suber	64	67	66	62	259 (-25)
3	Tom Whitney	67	69	63	61	260 (-24)
4	Frankie Capan III	68	62	64	67	261 (-23)

- **Paul Barjon** earned the second victory of his Korn Ferry Tour, first since 2021 HomeTown Lenders Championship, and rose from 147th to 28th on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Barjon, who held a share of the 36-hole lead as well as the outright 54-hole lead, posted the lowest 72-hole score by any player this season with a 26-under 258

- Korn Ferry Tour rookie **Jackson Suber** carded a career low 9-under 62 in the final round via six birdies, two eagles and one bogey en route to a career-high finish; he played the first 16 holes at 10-under par, but bogeyed the par-3 17th
- In his 109th start on Tour, **Tom Whitney** posted a career-low 10-under 61 in the final round to secure his third top-three finish of the season; he entered 2023 with one top-three finish in his previous 94 career starts on Tour; he finished T3 at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club in January, and T2 at the Club Car Championship at The Landings Golf & Athletic Club in March
- Whitney recorded three bogey-free rounds at the Memorial Health Championship, and his only blemish of the week was a double bogey at the par-4 15th in the second round
- **Frankie Capan III** recorded the third top-10 finish of his rookie season; he previously finished T3 at the HomeTown Lenders Championship in April, and T6 at the UNC Health Championship presented by STITCH in June