



## Pre-Tournament Notes – The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay

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**Dates:** January 15-18, 2022

**Where:** Great Exuma, The Bahamas

**Course:** Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Course (Par 72 / 7,027 yards)

**Course Designer:** Greg Norman (2003)

**Field:** 132 players

**Defending Champion:** Akshay Bhatia

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

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play

### Quick Links

- [Tournament Media Site](#)
- [Five Things to Know: 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Season](#)
- [Insider: Narrow Miss of TOUR Card Fuels Joey Garber into 2023](#)
- [Insider: Pierceson Coody Returns from Injury at Great Exuma](#)
- [Tee Times](#)

### Things to Know

- 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
- This week’s season-opening The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay is making its sixth appearance on the Korn Ferry Tour schedule, with 2017 being the inaugural playing
- Three of the top 10 finishers from the 2022 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay earned PGA TOUR cards at season’s end – Paul Haley II (2nd), Carl Yuan (T3), and Ben Griffin (T8)
- Defending champion **Akshay Bhatia** headlines this year’s field; he will attempt to become the second player in the Korn Ferry Tour’s 34-year history to successfully defend a title (Tyson Alexander became the first player to do so with victories at the 2021 and 2022 Veritex Bank Championship)

- Last year, Bhatia became the third-youngest winner in Korn Ferry Tour history, capturing the title at the age of 19 years, 11 months, 19 days
- **Pierceson Coody**, the No. 1 finisher in last season’s PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking, is in the field alongside twin brother **Parker Coody**, a conditional member for 2023 (qualified for Final Stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament) who is playing this week via a sponsor exemption
  - After the Coody twins helped Texas win the 2022 NCAA Championships, Pierceson accepted Korn Ferry Tour membership via PGA TOUR University and won his third start, while Parker finished No. 13 in the PGA TOUR University Velocity Global Ranking, accepted PGA TOUR Canada membership and won his seventh start
- **Mitchell Meissner** is set to make his Korn Ferry Tour debut and has fully exempt status this season by virtue of winning the 2021-22 PGA TOUR Latinoamérica Totalplay Cup
  - Mitchell’s younger brother, **Mac Meissner**, also has fully exempt status as a top-75 finisher from the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List; Mac finished No. 46 as a rookie last season
- **Wil Bateman** returns to the Korn Ferry Tour with fully exempt status for the 2023 season by virtue of winning the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada Fortinet Cup; he previously earned membership for the 2016 season, but only made one start after a T79 at Final Stage of the 2015 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament left him with only conditional status
  - Bateman has three PGA TOUR-sanctioned victories – one on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica in 2015 and two on PGA TOUR Canada in 2022

**Field Notes (as of 1/13/23)**

- Field includes 41 past Korn Ferry Tour winners with 57 total wins, including six winners from the 2022 season: **Akshay Bhatia**, **Pierceson Coody**, **Brandon Harkins**, **David Kocher**, **Andrew Kozan**, **T.J. Vogel**
- Field includes 13 past PGA TOUR winners with 24 total victories, led by **Sean O’Hair** and **Camilo Villegas** with four apiece
- Field includes two players currently inside OWGR top 200: **Chan Kim** (No. 144) and **Lanto Griffin** (No. 178)

**2022 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay Recap (January 16-19)**

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Akshay Bhatia	69	72	68	65	274 (-14)
2	Paul Haley II	74	67	67	68	276 (-12)
T3	Michael Gellerman	75	69	68	66	278 (-10)
	Corey Shaun	70	72	64	72	278 (-10)
	Carl Yuan	71	70	66	71	278 (-10)

- **Akshay Bhatia** entered the final round three strokes off the 54-hole lead but carded a 7-under 65 (tied for the lowest round of the day) for the victory
  - Bhatia won at 19 years, 11 months and 19 days old, only putting him behind Sungjae Im (19 years 9 months, 17 days) and Jason Day (19 years, 7 months, 26 days) on the list of the youngest winners in Korn Ferry Tour history
- Bhatia eventually finished at No. 30 on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Paul Haley II’s solo second was the first of six top-10s last season, highlighted by a win in July, which propelled him to a PGA TOUR card
- **Michael Gellerman**’s 7-under 29 on the back nine of the final round catapulted him up the leaderboard for a T3, his highest finish since a T3 at The Ascendant presented by Blue in 2019, a season which ended with him earning a PGA TOUR card
- Carl Yuan was one of two players who broke par in all four rounds en route to his first of five top-three finishes last season, highlighted by a victory in March, which earned him a PGA TOUR card at season’s end

**Past Champions**

Year	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	Margin
2022	Akshay Bhatia	69	72	68	65	274 (-14)	2

2020	Tommy Gainey	66	75	67	69	277 (-11)	4
2019	Zecheng Dou	67	66	67	70	270 (-18)	2
2018	Sungjae Im	69	69	72	65	275 (-13)	4
2017	Kyle Thompson	76	70	70	70	286 (-2)	2

- Zecheng Dou secured a return to the PGA TOUR last season, following a season-opening T28 in Exuma with a runner-up finish at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club, and a victory in July
- Last season on the PGA TOUR, Sungjae Im collected his second career victory and eventually finished T2 at the 2022 TOUR Championship; he capped the season representing the International Team in his second career Presidents Cup appearance

#### Course Information – Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Course

- Years Hosted: 2017-present
- Scoring Average (2022): 72.885 / +0.885
- Toughest Hole (2022): No. 18, Par 5, 637 yards – 5.232 / +0.232
- Easiest Hole (2022): No. 1, Par 5, 532 yards – 4.602 / -0.398

#### Tournament Scoring Records

- Low 18-Hole Score: 63, John Oda (2019, Round 1)
- Low 36-Hole Score: 131, John Oda (2019)
- Low 54-Hole Score: 200, Zecheng Dou (2019)
- Low 72-Hole Score: 270, Zecheng Dou (2019)
- Largest Margin of Victory: 4, Sungjae Im (2018) and Tommy Gainey (2020)

#### Players to Watch in 2023

1. [Chris Gotterup](#) – 2022 Haskins and Jack Nicklaus Award winner with 12 PGA TOUR starts (nine made cuts) since March 2022; 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 2023
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