



**2023 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay
(1st of 26 events on Korn Ferry Tour 2023 Schedule)**

**Great Exuma, The Bahamas
Sandals Emerald Bay**

**January 15-18, 2023
Par/Yards: 36-36—72/7,027**

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

Third-Round Notes – Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Weather: Mostly sunny with a high of 75. Wind E 7-14 mph.

Third-Round Leaderboard

Shad Tuten	69-67-66 – 202 (-14)
Peter Knade	75-66-64 – 205 (-11)
Akshay Bhatia	67-69-69 – 205 (-11)
Chandler Phillips	69-68-69 – 206 (-10)
Daniel Miernicki	70-67-70 – 207 (-9)
Cody Blick	68-70-70 – 208 (-8)

Things to Know

- Third-year Korn Ferry Tour member Shad Tuten holds a 54-hole lead for the first time in his career
- Four of the five previous champions of The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay entered the final round with the lead / co-lead; the only player to overcome a deficit in the final round is defending champion, Akshay Bhatia, who fired a final round 65 for the win; he enters the final round three strokes behind Tuten
- Bhatia aims to become just the second player in Korn Ferry Tour history to successfully defend a title
- In his second-career start, rookie Peter Knade carded a third-round 8-under 64 and sits T2 alongside Bhatia
- Final-round tee times will run from 7:00 through 11:20 a.m. ET in groups of three
- Transcripts from this week’s interviews are [available here](#)

Comparing the Co-Leaders (stats entering the week)

Category	Shad Tuten
Age	30 (June 24, 1992)
2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List	No. 59
Starts – wins – top-10s in Korn Ferry Tour (Career)	64-0-4
Starts – wins – top-10s in Korn Ferry Tour (2022)	24-0-1
Starts – wins – top-10s at The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay	2-0-0

Shad Tuten (T1/-14)

- Enters the final round atop the leaderboard for the first time of his career, holding a three-shot lead over Peter Knade and Akshay Bhatia
- Came into the day with a tie for the lead before carding a 6-under 66; Tuten started birdie-bogey on Nos. 1-2, his only bogey of the day, before rolling in six more birdies at Nos. 4, 8, 12 and 15-17
- Tuten’s previous best position entering a final round was T3 at the 2022 Chitimacha Louisiana Open, but a 1-over in the final round resulted in a T28 finish
- This week marks his third time playing in The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay; Tuten missed the cut in each of his previous two starts (2020 and 2022)
- Finished 59th on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List, posting five top-25s, including one top-10, across 24 starts; his best finish was a T6 at The Ascendant presented by Blue
- Initially joined the Korn Ferry Tour in 2020 and finished No. 69 on the 2020-21 Points list as a rookie
- Made his way to the Korn Ferry Tour via PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, playing the circuit from 2017-19 and finishing eighth in the 2019 Totalplay Cup for an exemption to Final Stage of the 2019 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament (finished T13 for guaranteed starts in the first eight events of what became the 2020-21 season)

- Played collegiately at Darton State College and Armstrong State University (exhausted eligibility summer 2014), but would not turn professional until 2016

Quotables

- **Shad Tuten** on holding the outright 54-hole lead: “This is kind of what you work for, this is the position you want to be in, but again, I'm just trying to do what I can do and keep the ball in play and just keep working hard.”
- **Shad Tuten** on his third-round performance: “I didn't do anything special at the beginning and just kind of again kept it in play, played my game, didn't really want to try to do anything special, just go out there and just kind of keep my head down and do what I do. The back nine was a little bit better. I hit it close on 15, and then 16 I actually hit one of the worst shots of the week on 16 and then followed it up with one of the best shots of the week, so that was a nice thing, and then I made about a 30 footer on 17. So it was a good day, we had a good time, great group, good friends of mine so it made it a lot better.”
- **Peter Knade** on being in contention in just his second Korn Ferry Tour start, “I'm right where I want to be. This is why you play. So just going to go out and try to get some rest tonight and go out tomorrow and give it my best shot.

Notes

- Korn Ferry Tour rookie **Peter Knade** (T2 / -11) carded nine birdies and just one bogey in the third round to climb inside the top three for the first time; after opening with rounds of 75 and 66, Knade tallied an 8-under 64 Tuesday, the lowest round of the week by any player in the field
 - Knade began the week with a 3-over 75 and entered the second round in T85 position
 - Knade is making his second career Korn Ferry Tour start – he Monday qualified into the 2021 Club Car Championship at The Landings Golf & Athletic Club but rounds of 84 and 71 resulted in a missed cut
 - The 25-year-old University of Maryland alum earned status for this season by playing his way through first and second stages before finishing T28 at Final Stage of Q-school last November
- **Akshay Bhatia** (T2 / -11) entered the third round with a share of the lead before recording a 3-under 69; Bhatia began the day with a birdie-bogey stretch at Nos. 1 and 2 and went on to roll in three straight birdies on the 14th, 15th and 16th
 - [Won the 2022 Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay](#) and became the third-youngest player to win on the Korn Ferry Tour, doing so at 19 years, 11 months, and 19 days old, only behind Sungjae Im (19 years 9 months, 17 days/2018 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay) and Jason Day (19 years, 7 months, 26 days/2007 Legend Financial Classic)
 - Bhatia will look to become the second player in Korn Ferry Tour history to successfully defend his title; the only player to achieve the feat is Tyson Alexander (2021 and 2022 Veritex Championship)
 - Despite claiming the title in this event last year, this marks the highest placement for Bhatia entering a final round; his previous best was T5 in this event last year, before tallying a final-round 7-under 65 to win
 - Has shot 3-under 69 or lower in six of his seven total rounds played in this event (67-69-69 this week)
 - 30th on the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List with four top-25s in 24 starts; also has 20 PGA TOUR starts in his career, highlighted by a T9 finish at the 2020 Fortinet Championship
- Bhatia, Knade and **Shad Tuten** (First / -11) are tied for the most birdies carded through 54 holes with 19
- **Chandler Phillips** (4th / -10) enters the final round inside the top five for the second time of his career; he was T3 after 54 holes at the 2021 Veritex Bank Championship and eventually finished T5, the best of his career
 - Phillips earned status for this season by finishing T10 at Final Stage of the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament
- **Daniel Miernicki** (5th / -9), making his 46th Korn Ferry Tour start, sits inside the top five after 54 holes for the first time of his career; the 32-year-old is in search of his first top-10 on the Korn Ferry Tour (previous best is a T16 at the 2020 King & Bear Classic at World Golf Village)
- After starting the day at T45, **Jorge Fernandez Valdes** (T7 / -7) recorded 10 birdies against three bogeys to climb inside the top 10; the 30-year-old Argentine started the day with a pair of pars before birdying five consecutive holes (Nos. 12-16) and another at the 18th for a 30 on the back-nine at Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Club
 - Fernandez Valdes is making his 69th career start on the Korn Ferry Tour this week and in search of his first top-10 finish since 2016 (T6 at the Servientrega Championship Presented by Efecty)
 - Valdez' 10 birdies in the third round marked the most by any player on Wednesday
- **Chirs Gotterup** (T46 / E) carded the only bogey-free round on Tuesday, making par on all 18 holes

Third-Round Course Statistics

- Scoring Average (Total): 71.588 [-0.412]
- Scoring Average (Front Nine – Par 36): 36.279 [+0.279]

- Scoring Average (Back Nine – Par 35): 35.309 [-0.691]
- Toughest Hole: No. 2, Par 3, 288 yards – 3.324 [+0.324]
- Easiest Hole: No. 1, Par 5, 532 yards – 4.574 [-0.426]