

**2023 The Panama Championship**  
**(3rd of 26 events on Korn Ferry Tour 2023 Schedule)**  
[Tournament Media Site](#) | [Interview Transcripts](#)

**Third-Round Notes – Saturday, February 4, 2023**

*Weather: Partly cloudy with a high of 90. N/NW winds 8-18, gusting up to 28 mph in the afternoon.*

**Third-Round Leaderboard**

Christopher Petefish	65-74-67-206 (-4)
Brett Drewitt	73-66-68-207 (-3)
Joe Highsmith	70-71-67-208 (-2)
Matt McCarty	70-70-68-208 (-2)
10 players tied	209 (-1)

**Things to Know**

- Second-year Korn Ferry Tour member Christopher Petefish snags his first career 54-hole lead following a 3-under 67, tied for the low round of the day
- 32-year-old Aussie Brett Drewitt sits solo second and is in search of his second top-five finish in the first three events of the season
- Fresh off a T3 finish last week, Matt McCarty sits T3 after 54 holes and is the only player this week to score even-par or better in each of the first three rounds
- Entering Sunday's final round, 14 players are within three shots of the lead
- Only 16 players carded rounds of 1-under or better Saturday, as the average score was 72.041 (+2.041 strokes over par)

**Charting the Leader (stats entering the week)**

Category	Christopher Petefish
Age	27 (May 31, 1995)
2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List	No. 90
Starts – wins – top-10s in Korn Ferry Tour (Career)	18-0-1
Starts – wins – top-10s in Korn Ferry Tour (2023)	0-0-0
Starts – wins – top-10s at The Panama Championship	0-0-0

**Christopher Petefish (Leader / -4)**

- In his first start of the 2023 season, the 27-year-old holds his first career 54-hole lead
  - Marks the second lead of any kind in his career as he held the 36-hole solo lead at the 2022 NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank where he eventually finished T3
- Carded a third-round 3-under 67, consisting of three birdies, two bogeys and an eagle at the par-5 fourth
- Sat in solo second after 18 holes following a first-round 5-under 65, before falling to T15 after a 4-over 74 in the second round
- Originally the fourth alternate at deadline, Petefish got into the field following Ryan Blaum's W/D on Monday; Petefish is playing out of the Finishers 76-100 on 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Points List / Additional Qualifying Tournament Finalist category
- In his second season on the Korn Ferry Tour; began the 2022 season with conditional status after a T91 at Final Stage of the 2021 Qualifying Tournament
  - Only played in one of the first nine events last season; climbed the priority ranking via reshuffles during the midpoint of the season and finished the year with three top-25 finishes in 14 starts, highlighted by the aforementioned NV5 Invitational presented by Old National Bank
  - Finished the 2022 season No. 90 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Played PGA TOUR Canada from 2018-21, making 17 starts over the four-year span and logging five top-25s, with his best finish being a T5 at the 2019 ATB Financial Classic

- Turned professional in 2018 out of Georgia Tech, where he was a two-time All-America Scholar and All-Atlantic Coast Conference selection as a senior; helped Georgia Tech capture the team title at the 2018 Atlantic Coast Conference Championship

### Quotables

- **Christopher Petefish** on holding the lead after 54 holes: "Honestly, just feels good to survive. It's such a tough test that anything under par is a pretty great round."
- **Petefish** on the course challenging players: "Greens are getting firmer, it's tough to get it close. It's just a lot harder to make birdies and make easy bogeys out there. It's just getting firmer, it's windier, it's hot. Just everything being so tough, you've just got to hit a lot of quality shots to just make par let alone birdie, so it's good."
- **Petefish** on playing a course of this difficulty in his first start of the season: "It's definitely a rude awakening to start the year on something this tough, but it was good to kind of see where the game's been the last three days. And obviously there's a bunch of people in the mix and it's so difficult. But, you know, got 18 more holes."

### Notes

- **Brett Drewitt** (2nd / -4), who is making his sixth appearance at The Panama Championship and 153rd Korn Ferry Tour start, carded a 2-under 68 Friday to climb to solo second, his best position after 54 holes in a Korn Ferry Tour start
  - The 32-year-old Aussie sits No. 12 on the Points List, powered by a T4 finish at the season-opening event, The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay
  - In his Korn Ferry Tour career, Drewitt has logged 14 top-10 finishes, including one victory at the 2020 Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS
- **Joe Highsmith** (T3 / -3) is in his fourth career Korn Ferry Tour start this week and enters the final round inside the top 10 for the first time
  - Highsmith is in his rookie season on the Korn Ferry Tour, gaining status via a T24 finish at Q-school last Fall; the 22-year-old Lakewood, Washington native placed T12 at last week's The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club
- **Matt McCarty** (T3 / -2), who placed T3 at last week's The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club, enters the final round inside the top five for the first time of his career
  - McCarty is in his second season on the Korn Ferry Tour; in 25 starts during the 2022 season, he tallied four top-25 finishes, including two top 10s, highlighted by a T5 at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open
- **Mac Meissner** (T5 / -1) entered the day T2 but fell to T5 following a third-round 3-over 73; he sits inside the top five for the third time of his career and first since last year's Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank where he placed T10
- **Highsmith, Petefish** and **Cristobal Del Solar** (T15 / E) posted the low rounds of the day with 3-under 67s
- **Abel Gallegos** (T34 / +2), the outright 36-hole leader, carded a 7-over 77 in the third round and fell to T34; Gallegos played the back nine Saturday at even par, after posting a 42 on the front that consisted of a quadruple bogey, double bogey, two bogeys and one birdie
  - In his rookie season on the Korn Ferry Tour, the young Argentine earned status by placing T17 at the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Qualifying Tournament; he has a decorated amateur career including titles at the 2021 Azalea Invitational, the aforementioned 2020 Latin America Amateur and the 2019 Menores Argentina Championship; the youngest 2023 Korn Ferry Tour member, Gallegos [turned 21 years old Thursday](#)