



**FORTINET<sup>®</sup>**  
**CUP**



## **ATB Classic**

Northern Bear Golf Course | Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada | June 29-July 2, 2023

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[PGA TOUR Canada Media Site](#)

### **Close calls motivate Korte as Tour moves to Alberta**

SHERWOOD PARK, Alberta—After a pair of second-place finishes, Chris Korte is looking to add his name to the list of winners as PGA TOUR Canada comes to its third different province in as many weeks, with players preparing for the ATB Classic.

Canadian Étienne Papineau won the Royal Beach Victoria Open presented by Times Colonist to open the season, and Korte tied for second. John Pak won the Elk Ridge Saskatchewan Open presented by Brandt last week and Korte again tied for second. This week Korte is looking to continue or improve on that record of success when competition begins Thursday at the Northern Bear Golf Course.

“The game has been feeling really solid, honestly, for the last couple months,” Korte said. “So, it’s really nice to see the results showing. I just have to keep doing what I’m doing, sticking to process, being smart about it, not getting too aggressive and then putting well.”

Korte, of Littleton, Colorado, played at the University of Denver and turned professional in 2018. He had status on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica starting in 2019, playing 18 events with little success.

Despite his hot start and his status as No. 3 on the Fortinet Cup points list, Korte must continue to play well to ensure his eligibility. He tied for 14th at the PGA TOUR Canada Qualifying Tournament in metropolitan Phoenix earlier this year, earning conditional status. If he finishes within the top 20 at a tournament—something he’s done twice this season—he’s exempt into the next event. Otherwise, he will join the list of alternates hoping to get in.

“It’s a little added pressure since I’m [the seventh player] out for the fourth event in Quebec,” Korte said. “So, a top-20 would be really big. Playing well this week is definitely important.”

Papineau, of Quebec, has 517 points and leads the Fortinet Cup standings by 17 points over Pak, who won his first professional event last week. Korte has 490 points and is followed by George Kneiser (283) and rookie Connor Howe (267).

The Fortinet Cup offers a \$100,000 player-bonus pool, with \$25,000 going to the winner. The top finisher gains membership to the full 2024 Korn Ferry Tour season, while the second-through fifth-place finishers earn conditional Korn Ferry Tour status.

Howe of Ogden, Utah, has also played well in both early season events and also tied for 2nd last week at the Elk Ridge Saskatchewan Open presented by Brandt. Howe recently finished his career at Georgia Tech and earned an exemption on PGA TOUR Canada by finishing 14th on the PGA TOUR University Ranking. He protected himself by also qualifying via the Qualifying Tournament in Dothan, Alabama, in March. Howe said the rigors of college golf helped prepare him for the professional game.

“You’re seeing it here, the Korn Ferry Tour, even the PGA TOUR with a lot of the guys,” Howe said. “It just shows how good the young golfers have gotten and how competitive college golf is. It’s prepared us really well to come out here, and I think we’re not afraid of anyone. We want to go out and compete with the best.”

Among those who played well in the ATB Classic a year ago was Eric Lilleboe of Okemos, Michigan. He tied for 12th in 2022 that helped him to a 28th-place Fortinet Cup finish. He was eager to return and compete despite the tournament moving from Edmonton Petroleum Golf and Country Club to Northern Bear. Lilleboe has made the cut in both PGA TOUR Canada events this summer but has yet to crack the top 25.

“Last year I came out of the gate playing a little better,” Lilleboe said. “But that’s just golf, you know. Sometimes you have to wait around for the good rounds to kick in and just work through the bad rounds and work through the bad habits. I’ve made two cuts, and that’s the positive, but I haven’t done very well on the weekend, and I plan on turning that around.”

The Northern Bear Golf Course, one of just three Jack Nicklaus Signature Courses in Canada, is hosting the ATB Classic for the first time. Located 40 minutes from downtown Edmonton, Northern Bear is a blend of tree-lined fairways, strategically placed bunkers, five lakes and large greens. It will play 7,352 yards long to par 72 during the ATB Classic and will be the longest course played this season on PGA TOUR Canada.

“It’s one of the longer courses we’ll play,” Lilleboe said. “The rough is up a bit. The greens are a little firmer. I think it’s going to punish misses a lot more than some of the other courses we see. There will definitely be a premium on ball striking.”

### Key Information

Canadian **Wil Bateman** of Edmonton, Alberta, won the 2022 ATB Classic in a three-man playoff and is competing on the Korn Ferry Tour this season. In 12 Korn Ferry starts, Bateman has made the cut seven times and has two top-10s and three top-25s. He is currently 41st on the points list. He also qualified for the 2023 RBC Canadian Open with his performance in the 2022 PGA TOUR Canada season. Tying for 68<sup>th</sup> in his national open, it marked the first time he made the cut in a PGA TOUR event.

The ATB Classic field includes several returnees who fared well at the ATB Classic a year ago when the event was played the Edmonton Petroleum Golf and Country Club. Canadian **Chris Crisologo** tied for seventh, **Eric Lilleboe**, **Thomas Longbella** and **Derek Oland** tied for 12th and **Cameron Sisk** and Canadian **Jared du Toit** tied for 15th.

**Kye Fisher** earned a spot in the ATB Classic via his victory in the Maple Leaf Junior Tour Future Stars Invitational. Fisher, 18, of Leduc, Alberta, shot 68-74 at Northern Bear Golf Course and snagged the

exemption. "I am super happy to have played well and am definitely looking forward to my first PGA TOUR Canada event," Fisher said.

This week completes the first leg of the PGA TOUR Canada season, where all events were staged in Western Canada. There is no tournament next week and the competition returns on July 13-16 for the Quebec Open powered by Videotron Business.

### **Quotable**

"It's great to be back in Edmonton. It's a really cool city. I had a great host family, and the people here just really seem like good people and treat the players really well, not only off the course, but on the course with coming out and supporting us. My experience in Edmonton has been awesome." – **Eric Lilleboe**

"I'm not going to really change anything. Based on last week, I'm playing well, four good rounds, so just going to try and do the same thing here." – **Connor Howe**

"I'm not overly long, maybe a little above average off the tee, but I feel like the driver is definitely the strength of my game. In the last few weeks, you had the opportunity to hit it if you wanted to, but also you didn't have to. I love golf courses that you're forced to hit it long and straight." – **Chris Korte**

### **Tournament Rundown**

**Dates:** June 29-July 2, 2023

**Tournament Name:** ATB Classic

**Social Media:** Twitter/Instagram/Facebook: @PGATOURCanada

Twitter: @ATBClassicGolf; Instagram: @atbclassic Facebook: atbclassicgolf

**Hashtags:** #FortinetCup

**Host Course:** Northern Bear Golf Course

**Par/Yardage:** 72 (36-36), 7,352

**Field:** 156 players from 10 countries and territories

**Countries:** Australia (3), Canada (28), England (3), France (1), Germany (1), Hong Kong (1), Japan (1), Korea (1), Switzerland (1), United States (116).

**Fortinet Cup Points:** Winner earns 500

**Purse:** (Canadian) \$225,000, with the winner earning \$40,500

**Cut:** Top-60 professional, and ties, after 36 holes plus any amateurs inside the top-60

### **Title Sponsor:**

ATB Financial began in 1938 to help Albertans through tough economic times. In that time, ATB Financial has grown and changed from one small Treasury Branch to become the largest Alberta-based financial institution, with assets of \$57.5 billion. Along the way, it has transformed people's understanding of what banking can—and should—make possible. Today, ATB's more than 5,000 team members deliver exceptional experiences to more than 800,000 clients through its many branches and agencies, its 24-hour Client Care Centre, four entrepreneur centres and its digital banking options. Everything it does is focused on how ATB Financial can serve Albertans—from providing expert advice and supporting entrepreneurs to helping Albertans buy a home and grow their wealth.

**Benefiting Charity:** Proceeds for this week's ATB Classic will benefit Youth on Course Alberta, which provides opportunities for young players, age 6-18, to play golf for \$5 or less on more than 20 participating courses in Alberta.

**Open Qualifying:** **David Timmins** of Sandy, Utah, had five birdies and an eagle to shoot 5-under 67 and win the Monday qualifier at The Links at Spruce Grove. The former Brigham Young University standout will be making his PGA TOUR Canada debut. **Chase Knox** of Alpharetta, Georgia, and **Davis Lamb** of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, tied for second, at 68. Knox played at North Carolina State and will be competing in his first PGA TOUR Canada event. Lamb played at Notre Dame and will make his 2023 Canadian debut after competing in nine events on PGA TOUR Canada a year ago. Here are all the qualifiers:

David Timmins (U.S.)	67
Chase Knox (U.S.)	68
Davis Lamb (U.S.)	68
Eric McCardle (U.S.)	69
Zach Mandry (U.S.)	69
Ethan Cairns (U.S.)	69
Aidan Goodfellow (Canada)	69
Joseph Juszczyk (U.S.)	69

**PGA TOUR Americas:** Following the completion of the 2023 PGA TOUR Canada season, the PGA TOUR Latinoamérica and PGA TOUR Canada will merge into a singular Tour to form PGA TOUR Americas, which will begin play in February 2024. PGA TOUR Americas will consist of 16 events contested across Latin America, Canada and the United States, from February through September. The top-10 finishers on the season-long points list will earn Korn Ferry Tour membership for the following season.

**Fortinet Cup:** The season-long points chase mirrors the competitive structure of the points-based competitions on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions and PGA TOUR Latinoamérica. Through the sponsorship, the Fortinet Cup offers a \$100,000 player bonus pool—with \$25,000 to the winner—to the top Fortinet Cup points-winners. The top Fortinet Cup points-earner gains membership to the full 2024 Korn Ferry Tour season, while the second-through-fifth finishers earn conditional 2024 membership. All top-five finishers are also exempt into the final stage of 2023 PGA TOUR Qualifying Tournament, and those finishing sixth through 25th are exempt into the second stage. In addition, the Fortinet Cup winner will also receive an exemption into the PGA TOUR's 2023 Fortinet Championship in California. Finally, the top-60 players on the points list will earn membership on the 2024 PGA TOUR Americas through the Latin American swing.