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CentrePort Canada Rail Park Manitoba Open

Southwood Golf & Country Club | Winnipeg, Manitoba | August 24-27, 2023

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### **Stakes are high for players at CentrePort Canada Rail Park Manitoba Open**

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba** – PGA TOUR Canada begins its three-week sprint to the finish line this week at the CentrePort Canada Rail Park Manitoba Open and dozens of players remain in contention to finish among the top five on the Fortinet Cup standings and earn a spot on the 2024 Korn Ferry Tour.

There is plenty at stake. The winner of the Fortinet Cup will receive a \$25,000 bonus and full status on the 2024 Korn Ferry Tour. The second- through fifth-place finishers earn conditional Korn Ferry status and all five will be exempt into the final stage of the 2023 PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry.

“It would mean a lot,” said John Pak, currently No. 4 in the Fortinet Cup standings. “Just that guarantee of being in the final stage of Q-School, that security blanket would be really nice.”

Pak won the Elk Ridge Saskatchewan Open presented by Brandt and has three top-25 finishes this season. Pak wants to keep the same steady approach for the final three weeks.

“Just keep playing my game,” Pak said. “I don’t think anything really changes. I try really hard not to think about it. Obviously, everyone does, but just try not to think about it and keep playing my game, one shot at a time, one tournament at a time.”

One tournament at a time is a good strategy, as there are only two more full-field events before the top 60 earn a spot in the season-ending Fortinet Cup Championship in Calgary.

Among the most prominent Canadians in the hunt this week at Southwood Golf & Country Club are Étienne Papineau (No. 5), Myles Creighton (No. 14), and Noah Steele (No. 18). Canadian Stuart Macdonald, who is No. 3 on the Fortinet Cup standings, is skipping this event to remain home in Scottsdale, Arizona with his wife Carly, who is delivering the couple’s first child.

Papineau won the season-opening Royal Beach Victoria Open presented by Times Colonist and led the Fortinet Cup standings for three-straight weeks early in the season, but currently sits in fifth after missing the cut for the first time at the Windsor Championship.

Creighton, of Digby, Nova Scotia, has only played in three PGA TOUR Canada events since completing his season ranked No. 2 on PGA TOUR Latinoamérica. Creighton's top finish in Canada was second at the Osprey Valley Open presented by Votorantim Cimentos CBM Aggregates, where he almost erased a four-shot deficit in the final round. After finishing tied for 44th in Windsor, he jumped two spots to land at 14th on the Fortinet Cup points list heading into Winnipeg.

Steele, of Kingston, Ontario, has enjoyed a solid season on PGA TOUR Canada thus far, which marks his second on the Tour. He has made four cuts in seven starts and placed among the top 15 each time. He has three top-10s and recorded a season-best 62 in his second round at the Windsor Championship, finishing the event tied for 14<sup>th</sup>, jumping four spots to No. 18 on the points list.

Canadians Sudarshan Yellamaraju, Jared du Toit, Jimmy Jones and Matthew Anderson are all capable of moving up the standings with a solid finish this week, as well.

Yellamaraju, of Mississauga, Ontario, has made the cut in four of seven starts. His best was a solo fourth at the ATB Classic and he had three-consecutive top-25s until missing the cut at the Windsor Championship. He is No. 23 in the Fortinet Cup.

Du Toit, of Calgary, Alberta, is No. 27 in the Fortinet Cup. He has made the cut in six of seven starts and is trying to rediscover the magic of the first week, when he tied for fourth at the Royal Beach Victoria Open.

Jones, of Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, is No. 28 on the Fortinet Cup. He won the final PGA TOUR Canada Qualifying Tournament to earn full exemption this season but didn't nab his first top-10 until tying for sixth at the Osprey Valley Open.

Anderson, of Mississauga, Ontario, is No. 37 on the points list. He is coming off a season-best 12<sup>th</sup>-place finish at the Windsor Championship and is hopeful of another strong finish this week.

"I've learned I have the game to win and be in the mix out here every week," Anderson said. "The margins are small, smaller out here than in college, for sure. The difference between missing the cut and making the cut by a few shots and having a good Saturday and being in contention is pretty small."

The field is chasing Fortinet Cup leader Davis Lamb, the only two-time winner this season, and rookie Sam Choi, who is currently No. 2 after his convincing win in early August at the Windsor Championship.

### Key Information

The CentrePort Canada Rail Park Manitoba Open is the eighth tournament on the 10-event PGA TOUR Canada schedule and comes after a two-week break in the season.

**Chris Korte** leads PGA TOUR Canada in final-round scoring average. Korte has averaged 64 strokes on Sunday, a full 1.75 strokes ahead of second-place **David Kim** and two strokes better than **Cooper Dossey**.

**Sam Choi's** presence at the top of the leaderboard has been unmatched this season. He's recorded six top-10 finishes – twice as many as **Noah Steele**, **Devon Bling** and **Brandon Hoelzer**, who each have three. He has also made the cut in every one of his professional starts, a feat only one other player - Australian **Jason Hong** - has done this year.

This is also **Hong's** rookie season, turning professional in 2023 after graduating from Lipscomb University with his master's degree. He graduated with his bachelor's degree from Purdue University, playing for the Boilermakers for three seasons.

**Bling**, who graduated from UCLA in 2022, currently sits in sixth of the Fortinet Cup standings and has three top-10s, two of which have resulted in runner-up finishes, once in a playoff.

**Ryan McMillan**, of Winnipeg, earned a spot in his first professional event when he shot a 6-under 66 to finish third at the Monday qualifier at Glendale Golf and Country Club. McMillan, who played at Eastern Florida State College, comes from a golf family; his father Dave and his uncles Rob and Darren have all played professionally in some capacity. **Rob McMillan** won the 1996 Manitoba Open as an amateur.

**Braxton Kuntz**, who recently won his third-straight Manitoba Amateur Championship, received a sponsor exemption. He plays golf at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

**Morgan Barron**, a center on the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, is in the field on a sponsor exemption. The club has been represented in the past by players **Mark Schiefele** and **Kyle Connor**.

The Manitoba Open was first played in 1919. As one of the oldest golf tournaments in North America it is a tradition that has lasted more than 100 years. In 1998, it was renamed the MTS Classic and later the Free Press Manitoba Classic. In 2008, it became the Players Cup and, in 2020, back to the original Manitoba Open. It was cancelled in 2020-21 because of COVID. Previous notable winners include **Graham DeLaet**, **C.T. Pan**, **Tom Hoge**, **Dave Barr**, **Dan Halldorson**, **Moe Norman** and **George Knudson**.

**Parker Coody**, the most recent past champion, shot a 27-under in 2022, the second-lowest score in relation to par in PGA TOUR Canada history. His eight-stroke win over **Ian Holt** tied him for the largest victory margin in Tour history. Coody is currently competing on the Korn Ferry Tour and is ranked No. 16.

Southwood Golf & Country Club, the host club, was established in 1894 and relocated in 2011 to a new course. Touted for being a "prairie-style links," the course was designed by **Thomas McBroom** and is located next to the Trappist Monastery Ruins. The course plays through tree groves, river valley and historic ruins, and features wind-swept bunkers and plenty of water hazards.

## Key Information

### Fortinet Cup Standings

(Windsor Championship)

Pos.	Player	Points
1	Davis Lamb (United States)	1,117
2	Sam Choi (United States)	1,020
3	Stuart Macdonald (Canada)	707
4	John Pak (United States)	690
5	Étienne Papineau (Canada)	644
6	Devon Bling (United States)	587
7	Chris Korte (United States)	581
8	Davis Shore (United States)	527
9	David Kim (United States)	432
10	Brian Richey (United States)	404

## Quotable

“My focus these next three weeks is pretty good here. Locking in what I want to do. I had a good finish here last year. I played well last year at the end of the season and hopefully I can do that coming in here.” – **Gavin Hall**, who tied for third at the 2022 Manitoba Open.

“The next goal would be to finish in the top five (on the Fortinet Cup) and to do that you’ve got to win. It’s super simple. You’ve got to win so go out and see if you can make some birdies.” – **Cameron Sisk**

“Just looking ahead and knowing that I have the game to be in contention and get a win out here. Not worrying about, ‘Oh, I’ve got to make the cut this week and get some points.’ Because that’s not really going to do you well. You want to have your lofty expectations and don’t be afraid to achieve them.” – **Matthew Anderson**.

## Tournament Rundown

**Dates:** August 24-27, 2023

**Tournament Name:** CentrePort Canada Rail Park Manitoba Open, the eighth of 10 official Fortinet Cup events

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

**Hashtags:** #FortinetCup

**Host Course:** Southwood Golf & Country Club

**Par/Yardage:** 72 (36-36), 7,311

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

**Countries:** Argentina (2), Australia (2), Canada (33), China (1), Costa Rica (1), England (1), France (1), Japan (2), Switzerland (1), United States (112)

**Fortinet Cup Points:** Winner earns 500

**Purse:** \$200,000, with the winner earning \$36,000

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

**Benefiting Charity:** The Manitoba Open will benefit the True North Youth Foundation and its work through Project 11 to support the mental wellness program at Camp Manitou. Dating back to 2013 the Manitoba Open has raised nearly three-quarters of \$1 million for local charities in the province.

**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.