



First-Round Leaderboard

Commissionaires Ottawa Open

Eagle Creek Golf Club

July 20, 2023

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[PGA TOUR Canada Media Center](#)

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Pos.	Name	Scores	Fortinet Cup Pos.
T1	Corey Shaun (United States)	32-32—64 (7-under)	30
T1	Sam Choi (United States)	31-33—64 (7-under)	5
T3	Brendan MacDougall (Canada)	32-33—65 (6-under)	T98
T3	Cole Bradley (United States)	33-32—65 (6-under)	25
T3	Bryce Emory (United States)	34-31—65 (6-under)	31
T3	David Kim (United States)	34-31—65 (6-under)	6
T3	Devon Bling (United States)	31-34—65 (6-under)	14
T8	Davis Lamb (United States)	32-34—66 (5-under)	1
T8	George Markham (United States)	34-32—66 (5-under)	73
T8	Joey Savoie (Canada)	32-34—66 (5-under)	T75
T8	Easton Paxton (United States)	32-34—66 (5-under)	79
T8	Sam Jean (United States)	33-33—66 (5-under)	T66
T8	Thomas Longbella (United States)	34-32—66 (5-under)	29
T14	Will Chandler (United States)	33-34—67 (4-under)	N/A
T14	Cameron Sisk (United States)	36-31—67 (4-under)	28
T14	Cooper Dossey (United States)	34-33—67 (4-under)	N/A
T14	Derek Oland (United States)	34-33—67 (4-under)	41
T14	Brandon Hoelzer (United States)	35-32—67 (4-under)	32
T14	Chase Sienkiewicz (United States)	36-31—67 (4-under)	15
T14	A.J. Ewart (Canada)	33-34—67 (4-under)	T54
T14	Chris Korte (United States)	35-32—67 (4-under)	4
T14	Thomas Giroux (Canada)	33-34—67 (4-under)	T127

Choi, Shaun atop the leaderboard after both shoot 64s

DUNROBIN, Ontario—As birdies go, it was a fairly non-descript one for Sam Choi. He hit his approach shot on the par-4 12th in the opening round of the Commissionaires Ottawa Open from the middle of the fairway to 12 feet and made the putt. The thing was, prior to the start of his round, Choi decided he would be more than happy to settle for par on the hole that played as the toughest hole Thursday. Choi used that birdie and six others during a bogey-free day to forge a tie with Corey Shaun, and they are a stroke ahead of Canadian Brendan MacDougall and U.S. players Bryce Emory, David Kim, Devon Bling and Cole Bradley. Fortinet Cup standings leader Davis Lamb, winner of the last two PGA TOUR Canada tournaments, is tied for eighth with five others, two shots back.

“I told my dad earlier today that I thought making par there would gain maybe a half a shot,” Choi said of the challenging, 512-yard par-4 12th. “So, making birdie there was big.”

His was one of only 13 birdies there in the opening round, the hole finishing with a stroke average of 4.471.

In his short time playing on PGA TOUR Canada—this is his fifth tournament—Choi has made a habit of rolling in birdies as he looks for his fifth consecutive top-10 finish and to improve on his No. 5 standing in the Fortinet Cup chase. In his previous four starts, the University of New Mexico and Pepperdine University product’s worst performance was his tie for sixth last week in Quebec. He has made 90 birdies this season, most by any player.

“There’s something about this country. I have some good karma out here,” noted Choi, whose other opening-round birdies came at Nos. 1, 7, 9, 13, 17 and 18.

Shaun is well-acquainted with success at this level. In 2021, he concluded his season on the Forme Tour—a circuit created for PGA Canada players unable to compete in Canada due to the global pandemic. He won the Forme Open at TPC River’s Bend in Ohio, turned in a runner-up performance at the Rolling Green Championship in Pennsylvania and then stayed in the Keystone State and tied for fourth at the Forme Tour Championship. Shaun ended the year second in the points race. That showing earned him conditional 2022 Korn Ferry Tour status.

At the next level, Shaun had instant success a year ago, tying for third at the season-opening Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay. That turned out to be his best performance of the season. He eventually finished 102nd in points and at one stretch missed 10 consecutive cuts.

A new year has brought new optimism for Shaun, his solid play Thursday indicative of that mindset. “It’s a really nice golf course. I feel if you hit good golf shots, you’re going to get rewarded. There are some shots where you need to step up and hit a good one. I did a good job of that today,” he said of Eagle Creek Golf Club.

Like Choi, Shaun was bogey-free. Particularly memorable were his final two birdies of the day, at No. 16 and No. 18. He rolled in a 25-footer on the 16th then canned a 30-footer to close his day.

“On those two, I was trying to two-putt, honestly. They luckily found the hole,” admitted Shaun, who played his college golf a 20-mile drive from Choi’s Malibu home, at UCLA. “I felt like I putted pretty well today. I felt like I did a good job of keeping my speeds up on the greens, having a lot of tap-ins, and I made a few longer putts on the back nine.”

After a couple weeks of wet conditions at the previous two tournaments, Emory was happy to see firm, fast conditions at Eagle Creek greet him. “I love it because I was able to use my stinger driver on some of those tight holes and chase [the ball] down there. The last couple of weeks, they would just hit and stop. It was great to see some run out the first time in a while,” he said.

Emory’s day started slowly, with a bogey at the first followed by three consecutive pars. But three front-nine birdies allowed him to turn in 2-under 34, and despite another bogey at—where else?—No. 12, he enjoyed five more birdies on his way to the 65 and tie for third.

Kim kept his hot play going following his career-best, runner-up finish four days ago. After rounds of 66-66-65-62 that led to his Quebec close call, Kim added a 65 Thursday.

Did you know Corey Shaun began the final round of the 2022 Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay with a one-stroke lead? Shaun shot a third-round 64 to put himself in the top position at the Korn Ferry Tour’s season-opening tournament. Shaun stumbled a bit on the final day, settling for a tie-for-third showing, with Michael Gellerman and Carl Yuan, when he closed with an even-par 72, finishing four shots behind winner Akshay Bhatia.

Key Information

Fortinet Cup Standings

(Québec Open powered by Videotron Business)

Pos.	Player	Points	Current Tournament Pos.
1	Davis Lamb (United States)	1,000	T8
2	Étienne Papineau (Canada)	593	T78
3	John Pak (United States)	551	T78
4	Chris Korte (United States)	522	T14
5	Sam Choi (United States)	419	T1
6	David Kim (United States)	348	T3
7	Connor Howe (United States)	339	T133
8	George Kneiser (United States)	302	T78
9	Eric McCardle (United States)	300	Not Playing
10	Nicolo Galletti (United States)	265	T58

For the second consecutive week, there are 30 Canadians competing. Through 18 holes, the top performer is Brendan MacDougall, currently tied for third, with an opening, 6-under 65. Here are all 11 players who are under-par through the first round.

Pos.	Player	Score
T3	Brendan MacDougall	65 (6-under)
T8	Joey Savoie	66 (5-under)
T14	A.J. Ewart	67 (4-under)
T22	Henry Lee	68 (3-under)
T22	Lawren Rowe	69 (2-under)
T37	Jake Lane	69 (2-under)
T37	Sudarshan Yellamaraju	69 (2-under)
T58	Noah Steele	70 (1-under)
T58	Stuart Macdonald	70 (1-under)
T58	Jared du Toit	70 (1-under)
T58	Chris R. Wilson	70 (1-under)

Brendan MacDougall put himself in solid position to make his second cut of the season with his opening-round 65. It's been nothing but close calls these last three weeks for the Calgary native after he opened the season with a tie for 37th at the Royal Beach Victoria Open. MacDougall missed the cut by a shot at both the Elk Ridge Saskatchewan Open presented by Brandt and last week's Quebec Open powered by Videotron Business. He was two off the cutline in his other start, at the ATB Classic. "It's not like I'm super far off. I'm not going to say today came out of nowhere because I have been playing good golf. I just haven't put it all together," he explained.

In his first start of the season, Canada's **Myles Creighton** had a disappointing opening round, shooting a 1-over 72. He is tied for 96th after 18 holes. Creighton recently completed the PGA TOUR Latinoamérica season, finishing second in the Totalplay Cup standings to earn 2024 conditional Korn Ferry Tour membership.

Davis Lamb hasn't cooled off any, shooting his ninth consecutive under-par round to begin the season. The winner of the last two tournaments turned in a 5-under 66, with four birdies, an eagle and a bogey on his card. He eagled the par-5 second hole to give his opening round a jolt.

Sam Choi always looks forward to seeing who he will be grouped with in a given round. "I truly believe that having a great [grouping] is one of the keys to having a good round," he said. In Thursday's opening round, he played with Davis Lamb and Derek Oland. "It was a good time with Davis and Derek out there. They are great, great guys. For me, I'm a very fast player. We throw some jokes at each other. We talk about golf and maybe some other things. It was fun." The

trio combined to shoot 16-under, with Choi at 7-under, Lamb at 5-under and Oland at 4-under. They together totaled 15 birdies and an eagle on day one, with Lamb making the lone bogey.

Canada's **Joey Savoie** shook off the effects of his disappointing, 3-over finish last week in Quebec after entering the final round two strokes off the lead. He ultimately tied for 19th. Savoie had a clean scorecard Thursday, with an impressive 4-under 32 on his opening nine, including a birdie at the ninth. He then waited eight more holes for his final birdie of the day, on the 18th. Savoie will begin Friday's second round tied for eighth.

Ottawa Senators' alternate captain **Claude Giroux**, playing this week as an amateur, opened the tournament with an 8-over 79.

The United States' **Cole Bradley** sits in a tie for third, a stroke behind the leaders after 18 holes. His 6-under 65 came courtesy Thursday of seven birdies and a lone bogey. This was Bradley's fifth consecutive opening round at par or better, and he's only had one over-par score in his 15 rounds this season. That was a third-round 78 at the ATB Classic. Bradley is 25th in the Fortinet Cup standings, thanks, in large part, to his tie for eighth at the Royal Beach Victoria Open.

It's been a difficult start to the season for **Cooper Dossey**. The Texas native has played in three of the first four tournaments—skipping Quebec last week. Dossey has yet to make a cut, but he went a long way toward ending that streak, putting himself in position to get to the weekend with his opening 67, leaving him tied for 14th.

Quotable

"I want to hit smart, conservative targets and try to make some putts—or at least two-putt, not getting ahead of myself."

—**Corey Shaun**

"My experience in Canada has been positive. It's a lot of different golf courses I've experienced, with different terrains and different looks. Each one of them challenges my game in different ways. Some weeks I've done a good job and some I haven't. Each week I try to improve, and Canada—being up here—is a great way for me to do that." —**Corey Shaun**

"I just go through a checklist of what I have to do on every shot and try to keep it as simple as possible. As soon as I get over a shot, I have one or two swing thoughts, let my mind go dark and go from there." —**Brendan MacDougal**

"I really stuck to my process, something I've been trying to do for the last few weeks after Saskatchewan, where I was out of it mentally. I really worked on that." —**Brendan MacDougal**

"Putting is definitely the strength of my game. I try to keep the ball in front of me off the tee. I'm a good wedge player and good putter, so I leave it up to that." —**Cole Bradley**

"Like everyone every now and again can get upset (with poor play). Some people are better than others in letting it not affect them. I did struggle with that last week, and I told myself this week I was not going to struggle with it. If I hit a bad shot or a good shot, I was going to walk to the next shot and execute." —**Cole Bradley**

"I drove it really well, and I think that's the key out here. I missed one fairway." —**Bryce Emory on his 6-under 65**

"I love it because I was able to use my stinger driver on some of those tight holes and chase [the ball] down there. The last couple of weeks, they would just hit and stop. It was great to see some run out the first time in a while." —**Bryce Emory on Thursday's fast, dry conditions at Eagle Creek Golf Club**

"I have re-found the form I have been looking for for over a year now. Even though I kept my card last season, I was still grinding it out there." —**David Kim on his recent success**

"I hit the ball in the right spots, and I never put myself out of position. I did a really good job today of managing how my game felt and where I needed to hit my golf ball in order to make the best score possible." —**Devon Bling**

First-Round Weather: Mostly sunny and warm. High of 30. Wind E at 5-7 kph.