



**First-Round Leaderboard**  
**Royal Beach Victoria Open**  
**Uplands Golf Club**  
**Victoria, British Columbia**  
**June 15, 2023**  
Full [Leaderboard](#)  
[PGA TOUR Media Site](#)

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Pos.	Name	Scores
1	George Kneiser (United States)	32-30—62 (8-under)
T2	Sam Harned (United States)	29-34—63 (7-under)
T2	Jared du Toit (Canada)	31-32—63 (7-under)
T2	Chris Francoeur (United States)	33-30—63 (7-under)
T5	Cole Bradley (United States)	34-30—64 (6-under)
T5	Chris Korte (United States)	32-32—64 (6-under)
T5	Étienne Papineau (Canada)	33-31—64 (6-under)
T5	Genki Okada (Japan)	30-34—64 (6-under)

### **Kneiser shoots 62, takes first-round lead in Victoria**

VICTORIA, British Columbia—George Kneiser, playing in the first group of the day, shot a bogey-free 8-under 62 to take the opening-round lead at the Royal Beach Victoria Open presented by Times Colonist, the first event on PGA TOUR Canada’s 10-tournament schedule.

Kneiser holds a one-shot lead over Canadian Jared du Toit of Kimberly, British Columbia, Sam Harned of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Chris Francoeur of Newburyport, Massachusetts, in pursuit of the season-long Fortinet Cup.

Kneiser began his round on the back nine at Uplands Golf Club. His card included a 32 on the first nine and a 30 on the final nine. A birdie on No. 7 (his 16th hole) was from two feet and allowed him to finish the round with three consecutive birdies.

“I felt like my game has been really close to being really good for a while, but it hasn’t shown that it’s been really good,” Kneiser said. “Today I finally kind of put it all together ... tee to green and on the green, so all good.”

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Kneiser had nine PGA TOUR Canada starts in 2022 and made the cut three times. The 62 was five shots better than his previous best PGA TOUR Canada score, posted at the ATB Classic presented by Volvo Edmonton.

Du Toit also started on the back nine and shook off a bogey at No. 11 to shoot 32. He added four more birdies on the second nine for a 31. It was his best score since shooting 64 at the CRMC Championship presented by Gertens in August 2022.

"I found trouble a couple times and was able to get away with bogey once and a couple of real nice pars a couple other times," du Toit said. "That's kind of the formula to play well out here this week because there are plenty of birdie looks. But, you know, there are plenty of bogey opportunities, as well."

Du Toit made his professional debut at the Royal Beach Victoria Open in 2017 and has played the Uplands Golf Club many times. His brother was on the golf team at the University of Victoria, and he said, "I've played it enough times to not have any excuses for bad course management."

The veteran has played in 53 previous PGA TOUR Canada tournaments and recorded five top-10s. This year, du Toit has qualified for two PGA TOUR events but did not make the cut in either.

Francoeur, whose mother is from Quebec, was 2-under at the turn before catching fire on the back nine, where he opened with three consecutive birdies en route to shooting a 30.

"Nothing was really falling on the first six holes, but (I) had a nice two-putt birdie on seven and made a good one on nine, so that kind of got me going at the turn," Francoeur said. "I made three or four in a row, so I was riding a good wave there."

Harned shot a 6-under 29 on the front nine and was on a "59 watch" after he made an eagle on 476-yard par-5 12th hole to drop to 8-under. But a bogey on the 14<sup>th</sup> hole derailed Harned's round, and he parred in for a 63 in his PGA TOUR Canada debut.

"When I made the eagle on 12, I knew I shouldn't be thinking about it, but I was like, yeah, let's get three or four more and hope for the good round," Harned said.

Harned didn't learn he had gotten into the field as an alternate until Sunday. He flew from his home in Reno, Nevada, to Seattle on Monday. He then took the ferry Tuesday in time to play his practice round.

"I was six spots out of the 10 [players] that are in, so I just kind of gave up on thinking that I was going to play," Harned said. "I was sitting on the couch on Sunday night and got the call. [The Tour official] was like, 'Hey, you're in the field. Can you get up?' I was like, 'Yeah, give me an hour and I'll figure it out.' So, it's amazing."

Harned's last PGA TOUR-affiliated competition was the final stage of the Korn Ferry Tour Q-School in November 2022. He finished 134<sup>th</sup>, at 9-over 293, earning membership on the Korn Ferry Tour, but not a high enough status to guarantee any starts. After that qualifier, he put his clubs down for a bit and took a mental break.

Tied for fifth at 6-under 64 are Canadian Etienne Papineau of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, Cole Bradley of Louisville, Kentucky, Genki Okada of Japan, and Chris Korte of Littleton, Colo.

Six are tied for ninth with 65s, U.S. players Patrick Moriarty, J.T. Griffin, Blain Turner, Eric Lilleboe and Nicolo Galletti and Canada's Henry Lee, who had a hole-in-one.

**Did you know a year ago**, 10 different PGA TOUR Canada players made holes-in-one in four different tournaments? The first aces of 2022—four of them—came at the second tournament of the campaign, the ATB Classic presented by Volvo Edmonton.

## Key Information

Eighteen Canadians broke par in the first round of the Royal Beach Victoria Open led by Jared du Toit's 7-under 63 that left him tied for second. Here is the complete list.

Pos.	Player	Score
T2	Jared du Toit	63 (7-under)
T5	Étienne Papineau	64 (6-under)
T9	Henry Lee	65 (5-under)
T15	Ty Campbell	66 (4-under)
T15	Brendan Leonard	66 (4-under)
T15	A.J. Ewart	66 (4-under)
T27	Max Sekulic	67 (3-under)
T27	Michael Blair	67 (3-under)
T27	Lawren Rowe	67 (3-under)
T37	Noah Steele	68 (2-under)
T37	Jeevan Sihota	68 (2-under)
T37	Brendan MacDougall	68 (2-under)
T37	Stuart Macdonald	68 (2-under)
T37	Etienne Brault	68 (2-under)
T56	Sudarshan Yellamaraju	69 (1-under)
T56	Richard Jung	69 (1-under)
T56	Max Sear	69 (1-under)
T56	Matthew Anderson	69 (1-under)

Last Sunday, **Jared du Toit** watched the final round of the PGA TOUR's RBC Canadian Open from his grandparents' home in North Saanich, British Columbia, about 35 minutes from Royal Beach. He was pleased to see fellow countryman **Nick Taylor** win the event in a playoff. "After that (Taylor) can't really go anywhere in Canada without getting recognized now," du Toit said.

**Jared du Toit** shared the 54-hole lead at the 2016 RBC Canadian Open, as an amateur, with **Brandt Snedeker**, before going on to tie for ninth. "The story I tell is I was on the house's money after making the cut and just had a great week. It was surreal," he said.

**Henry Lee** scored the first hole-in-one of the season. He aced the 185-yard 14th hole with an 8-iron. Lee said, "That's definitely not a pin I was trying to go for. I pulled it about five yards. I hit it flush, and it landed just short and trickled in."

Former Arizona State Sun Devil **Jared du Toit** gave credit for his putting success to his girlfriend/caddie Raquel Olmos, who also played at Arizona State, from 2018-21. "She can play," du Toit said. "She's caddied for me, and I've caddied for her. We know what to say. She's a good putter, so she's a big help on the greens, which is awesome. I think she got about six of those (birdies) today, and I get one. That's kind of how it works."

**Genki Okada** of Japan birdied his first four holes of the day and shot 30 on the front nine. In what marks his first PGA TOUR Canada start, he finished his round with one more birdie on the back side for a 6-under 64.

**A.J. Ewart** of Coquitlam, British Columbia, looked good in his professional debut. Ewart had six birdies and shot 4-under 66. The graduate of Barry University in Miami, Florida, was the 2022 NCAA Division II Player of the Year.

**Brian Carlson** of Madison, Connecticut, is among a group of 12 tied at 4-under 66. Carlson, a winner at the 2022 Prince Edward Island Open, was hot coming into the first round after shooting 63 in Wednesday's pro-am. Four bogeys slowed his opening round a bit, including one on the par-5 12th.

**Michael Slesinski** of Fremont, California, who shot a 9-under 63 to qualify on Monday, opened the first round with a 3-under 67. He is tied for 27th after 18 holes.

#### **Quotable**

"I tried to add a little swing speed (during the winter), and I actually started swinging too hard and (was) all over the map. But a month ago we got it toned down, now and I'm starting to hit it a little farther than I did last summer and straighter. So hopefully we can keep that up." – **George Kneiser**

"I played my practice round on Tuesday, and I felt like a 20-handicapper. I was hitting some really bad shots on the range. Then I made a few swing adjustments, and it just really worked out for a really easy 13 holes. Then the last seven holes got a little a sloppy." – **Sam Harned**

"After the bogey, I hit a bad drive and got up and down from, like, 80 yards, which really kind of kept me going; put myself in a good spot, had a good number, hit a good iron shot and made a nice putt a couple different times. Quite pleased for sure." – **Jared du Toit**

"This golf course is very similar to golf back home (in Massachusetts). It's not super long. You've got to be accurate off the tee. (Hitting) fairways are a premium out here. This golf course is in such good shape right now that if you hit good shots and good putts, you're most likely going to be rewarded for it." – **Chris Francoeur**

"I didn't really see it, but my playing competitors saw it, so it was a pretty sweet moment." – **Henry Lee, about his hole-in-one**

**First-Round Weather:** Overcast and mild. High of 19. Wind SSW at 12 to 15 kph. Light rain at the end of the day.