



2024 LECOM Suncoast Classic
(8th of 26 events on Korn Ferry Tour 2024 Schedule)

Lakewood Ranch, Florida April 18-21, 2024 Points: 500 (winner)
 Lakewood National Golf Club Par/Yards: 36-36—71/7,133 Purse: \$1,000,000 / \$180,00 (winner)

First-Round Notes – Thursday, April 18, 2024

Weather: Mostly sunny. High of 87. Wind ESE 5-10 mph with gusts up to 20 mph.

First-Round Leaderboard

Mason Andersen 62 (-9)
 Patrick Cover 63 (-8)
 Cole Hammer 63 (-8)

Six players tied at 7-under

Things to Know

- **Mason Andersen**, No. 1 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, cards a 9-under 62 to take the first-round lead
- **Patrick Cover** and **Cole Hammer** sit one stroke off the lead at 8-under
- Six players are tied for fourth at 7-under, including Tampa, Florida resident **Jackson Suber** and Korn Ferry Tour winner **Kevin Velo**
- 15-year-old **Miles Russell**, the No. 1 ranked player in the Rolex AJGA Rankings, carded an opening round 3-under 71
- This is the sixth playing of the LECOM Suncoast Classic at Lakewood National Golf Club in Lakewood Ranch, Florida

First-Round Lead Notes

- 0 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win the LECOM Suncoast Classic
- 0 First-round leaders/co-leaders to win on Tour in 2024

Charting the Leader

Category (Stats entering week)	Mason Andersen
Age	25 (Nov. 23, 1998)
2024 Korn Ferry Tour Points List	No. 1
Starts – Wins – Top-10s in Korn Ferry Tour career	33-1-7
Starts – Wins – Top-10s on Korn Ferry Tour in 2024	7-1-3
Starts – Wins – Top-10s at LECOM Suncoast Classic	1-0-0

Mason Andersen (Leader/-9)

- Opening round 9-under 62 marks the lowest opening round score of his career and second-lowest overall (61/R4, 2023 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics)
- Led all players with 11 birdies, rolling in six consecutive birdies from Nos. 4-9 before a par on the par-5 10th; carded four more consecutive birdies on Nos. 11-14, followed by his final birdie of the day on the par-4 18th; bogeys came on the par-4s first and 16th
- Earns his second 18-hole lead/co-lead in his 34th career start on the Tour (2023 Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance, finished T10)

- Currently sits No. 1 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List
- Earlier this season, defeated Kris Ventura in the second hole of a sudden-death playoff to win the 117th Visa Argentina Open presented by Macro for his first career Korn Ferry Tour victory
 - His victory earned him a spot in the 2024 Open Championship at Royal Troon
- Owns two additional top-10 finishes this season along with his victory in Argentina (The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay/T7; Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard/T8)
- Missed the cut in his only other previous start at the LECOM Suncoast Classic in 2023
- Finished No. 36 on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List, earning fully exempt status for the 2024 Korn Ferry Tour Season
- Turned professional in summer 2022 following five seasons at Arizona State University, where he twice earned medalist honors, garnered 2022 All-America Third Team recognition, earned a 2019 All-Pac-12 Conference First Team selection, and went 3-0 in match play as Arizona State finished runner-up at the 2022 NCAA Championships
- Currently resides in his hometown of Mesa, Arizona

Quotables

Mason Andersen on improvements in his mental game this season... “Started working with a sports psychologist, started just having a little bit more belief in myself, not getting so up, you know, not getting so high, not having those expectations of you should birdie every hole and just doing the best I can with every shot kind of mindset.”

Kevin Velo on his opening round 7-under 64... “I feel like me and my caddie have a really good strategy going. The greens are really firm this week, which is a nice change from some of the courses we play later, so it's nice to think about the golf course a little more. We hit some really good wedge shots, but mainly just kept it in play. It was a clean card, putted it well when I needed to and made a couple.

Velo on how 2023 PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry helped him... “It was huge. We talked at final stage and it was a grind, but it kind of showed me that I could do it. I definitely doubted myself a little bit last year, which it can be hard, but once I finished up in Columbus dead last in the field, I was pretty motivated to get back on the horse and grind away. If I hadn't gone through that, I wouldn't have won in Colombia, I wouldn't be playing as good as I am right now. It's really important. I think Q School's the best tournament in all of golf, it's a huge opportunity to get through that and now we're playing great.

Notes

- **Cole Hammer** (T2/-8), who made 10 starts on the PGA TOUR last season, made seven birdies (Nos. 1, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17) and an eagle on his 18th hole, the par-5 ninth, against one bogey (No. 18) to finish with an 8-under 63
 - The University of Texas Alum owns two top-10 finishes in seven starts this season (Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard/6th; 117th Visa Argentina Open presented by Macro/T10)
- **Patrick Cover** (T2/-8), who finished T16 in this event last season, recorded his lowest round of the season with a bogey-free 8-under 63
- Tampa, Florida native **Jackson Suber** (T4/-7), who held the 18-hole co-lead at the 2023 LECOM Suncoast Classic, carded an opening round bogey-free 7-under 64
- **Kevin Velo** (T4/-7), who won the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard, posted a bogey-free 7-under 64; the fifth bogey-free round of his Korn Ferry Tour Career (last: 2023 Astara Chile Classic presented by Scotiabank/R2)
- **Ross Steelman** (T4/-7), who Finished third in the season opener at The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay, turned in a 7-under 64 with eight birdies (Nos. 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 17, 18) against one bogey (No. 1)

- Fresh off a win at the Club Car Championship at The Landings Golf & Athletic Club, **Steven Fisk** (T10/-6) follows up his victory in Savannah, Georgia with a 6-under 65, matching his low round of the season (2023 Club Car Championship at The Landings Golf & Athletic Club/R2)
- **Kamaiu Johnson** (T10/-6), who Monday qualified into this week's field, started his day with an eagle on the par-5 10th and went on to make six birdies (Nos. 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 18) against two bogeys (Nos. 1,2) en route to a 6-under 65
 - Johnson is making his second career Korn Ferry Tour start and first since the 2021 season (2020 Emerald Coast Classic at Sandestin/MC)
- **Miles Russell** (T45/-3), who is playing on a sponsor exemption, posted an opening round 3-under 68 with five birdies (Nos. 4, 10, 12, 13, 14) against two bogeys (Nos. 2, 5) in his Korn Ferry Tour debut
 - Russell is the third-youngest player to tee it up in a Korn Ferry Tour event and is the fifth player under the age of 16 to compete on the Korn Ferry Tour, joining Michelle Wie West, Esteban Jaramillo, Greg Lavoie, and current Korn Ferry Tour member Carter Jenkins.
 - The youngest player to make the cut in a Korn Ferry Tour event was Gipper Finau at 16 years, 20 days at the 2008 Utah Championship
- Lakewood Ranch resident **Kevin Roy** (T106/E) finished his opening round even par with two birdies against two bogeys
 - Roy's best finish in the event was a T14 in 2021
- Eight players completed the first round bogey-free