



## Pre-Tournament Notes – The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay

**On-Site PGA TOUR Media Contact:** Griffin Klumb, 262-441-3075, [GriffinKlumb@pgatourhq.com](mailto:GriffinKlumb@pgatourhq.com);

Preston Edwards, 904-294-3724, [PrestonEdwards@pgatourhq.com](mailto:PrestonEdwards@pgatourhq.com)

**Dates:** January 14-17, 2024

**Where:** Great Exuma, The Bahamas

**Course:** Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Course (Par 72 / 7,027 yards)

**Course Designer:** Greg Norman (2003)

**Field:** 132 players

**Defending Champion:** Chandler Phillips

**Purse:** \$1,000,000 (\$180,000/winner)

**Format:** 72-hole stroke play

### Quick Links

- [Tournament Media Site \(for tee times, transcripts, media hub access\)](#)
- [2024 Korn Ferry Tour: 10 players to watch this season](#)
- [See who earned Korn Ferry Tour status at PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry](#)

### Things to Know

- This week's season-opening The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay is making its seventh appearance on the Korn Ferry Tour schedule, with 2017 being the inaugural playing
- Two of the top 10 finishers from the 2023 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay earned PGA TOUR cards at season's end – Chandler Phillips (1st) and David Skinnis (9th)
  - Reigning champion Chandler Phillips won last year's event with a two-stroke margin of victory over **Peter Knade** and **Cody Blick**
  - Phillips entered the final round four strokes behind 54-hole leader Shad Tuten before carding a 4-under 68 to claim his first PGA TOUR-sanctioned title
  - Phillips finished the 2023 season No. 10 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List to earn his first PGA TOUR card
- Five of the top 10 finishers at last year's The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay return to the field this week – **Cody Blick** (T2), **Peter Knade** (T2), **Will Bateman** (T4), **Brett Drewitt** (T4) and **Paul Peterson** (10th)
- Notable past champions include Akshay Bhatia (2022) and Sungjae Im (2018)
  - Im's title in 2018 marked the second-youngest winner in Korn Ferry Tour history (19 years, 9 months, 17 days) and Bhatia's win in 2022 marked the third-youngest winner in the Tour's history (19 years, 11 months, 19 days)
- **Tommy Gainey** (2020) is the lone past champion in the field

### Field Notes

- Field includes 50 past Korn Ferry Tour winners with 55 total wins, led by **Tommy Gainey** with three
- Field includes 12 past PGA TOUR winners with 21 total victories, led by **Sean O'Hair** with four
- Four winners from the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season are in the field this week:
  - **Ricky Castillo** (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open Benefitting KU Wichita Pediatrics), **Jorge Valdés Fernández** (UNC Health Championship presented by STITCH), **Rhein Gibson** (astara Golf Championship) and **Spencer Levin** (Veritex Bank Championship)
- **Ryan Gerard** (No. 201) is the highest ranked player in the field
- The youngest player in the field is South African **Aldrich Potgieter** (19 years old), who turned professional last year after appearances as an amateur at the 2023 Masters Tournament, U.S. Open, and the Memorial

Tournament presented by Workday; he made his professional debut at the Korn Ferry Tour's 2023 Compliance Solutions Championship, where he finished T35 as a sponsor exemption

- Potgieter won the 2022 Amateur Championship at age 17, making him the second-youngest winner in the event's history
- Two of the top five finishers in the PGA TOUR University Class of 2023 are in the field: **Fred Biondi** (No. 2) and **Ross Steelman** (No. 4)

#### 2024 Korn Ferry Tour Season

- 30 PGA TOUR Cards will be awarded to the top finishers on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List at the end of the season
- Korn Ferry Tour Finals
  - Final four events of the season where members will compete for increased purses and points (600 points for winning one of the four Finals events, compared to 500 for winning one of the 22 preceding events) to determine the season-long points race, in addition to a progressive reduction in field sizes
    - Albertsons Boise Open presented by Chevron (August 22-25)
    - Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation (September 12-15)
    - Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship (September 19-22)
    - Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance (October 3-6)

#### 2023 The Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay Recap (January 15-18)

Pos.	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Chandler Phillips	69	68	69	68	274 (-14)
T2	Cody Blick	68	70	70	68	276 (-12)
	Peter Knade	75	66	64	71	276 (-12)

- Chandler Phillips (Winner/-14) entered the final round four strokes off the 54-hole lead but carded a 4-under 68 with four birdies on the back nine to secure a two-stroke victory
  - Phillips was one of two players in the top 10 not to record a double-bogey or worse on the week
  - Phillips eventually finished at No. 10 on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List to earn his first PGA TOUR card
- **Cody Blick** (T2/-12) recorded his first of two consecutive runner-up finishes to begin the 2023 season
  - Blick's T2 was his best career finish in 27 starts up to that point
- **Peter Knade** (T2/-12) recorded a runner-up finish in his first start as a Korn Ferry Tour member and second of his career
- David Skinnis (9th/-10) recorded one of his five top-10 finishes that propelled him to a No. 12 finish on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List to return to the PGA TOUR

#### Past Champions

Year	Player	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	Margin
2023	Chandler Phillips	69	68	69	68	274 (-14)	2
2022	Akshay Bhatia	69	72	68	65	274 (-14)	2
2020	Tommy Gainey	66	75	67	69	277 (-11)	4
2019	Zecheng Dou	67	66	67	70	270 (-18)	2
2018	Sungjae Im	69	69	72	65	275 (-13)	4
2017	Kyle Thompson	76	70	70	70	286 (-2)	2

#### Course Information – Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Course

- Years Hosted: 2017-present
- The course ranked as the No. 3 toughest course on Tour last season
- Scoring Average (2023): 72.440 / +0.440
- Toughest Hole (2023): No. 5, Par 4, 499 yards – 4.334 / +0.344

- Easiest Hole (2023): No. 1, Par 5, 532 yards – 4.550 / -0.450

#### **Tournament Scoring Records**

- Low 18-Hole Score: 63, John Oda (2019, Round 1)
- Low 36-Hole Score: 131, John Oda (2019)
- Low 54-Hole Score: 200, Zecheng Dou (2019)
- Low 72-Hole Score: 270, Zecheng Dou (2019)
- Largest Margin of Victory: 4, Sungjae Im (2018) and Tommy Gainey (2020)

#### **Players to Watch in 2024**

1. [Aldrich Potgieter](#) – The 19-year-old South African turned pro in June 2023 and earned eight guaranteed starts on the Korn Ferry Tour this season as the medalist at Q-School's Second Stage in Valdostam Georgia. Before turning pro, he won The Amateur Championship to earn a spot in the 2023 Masters and U.S. Open, where he made the cut.
2. [Fred Biondi](#) – Finished No. 2 in the 2023 PGA TOUR University rankings after winning the NCAA Division I individual and team titles at the University of Florida. He made eight starts last season on the Korn Ferry Tour, highlighted by a T31 at the BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by TD SYNEX. With a T10 finish at Final Stage of Q-School Biondi secured 12 guaranteed starts this season.
3. [Ricky Castillo](#) – He became the 19th player in Korn Ferry Tour history to win in his debut with a victory at the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open; at 22 years old he was the youngest winner on the Tour last season.
4. [Cooper Dossey](#) – Secured 12 guaranteed starts at a minimum on the Korn Ferry Tour in 2024 with a T14 finish at the Final Stage of Q-School. Dossey was the first player in Baylor's history to earn first-team All-American honors.
5. [Ross Steelman](#) – Made the cut in four of eight starts last season on the Korn Ferry Tour, highlighted by a T25 at the Utah Championship presented by Zions Bank. He earned status for 2024 with a T28 finish at Final Stage of Q-School.
6. [Shad Tuten](#) – Finished No. 32 on the season-long Korn Ferry Tour Points List last season, notching five top-10s with three top-five finishes. He did not compete at Final Stage of Q-School due to a heart issue.
7. [David Kocher](#) – A two-time winner on the Korn Ferry Tour, Kocher finished No. 49 on the Points List last season and has spent three full seasons on the Korn Ferry Tour.
8. [Chandler Blanchet](#) – Won twice on PGA TOUR Latinoamerica, now PGA TOUR Americas, to win the Totalplay Cup and earn full Korn Ferry Tour status. Blanchet was the 2017 NCAA Division II Player of the Year as a junior at the University of West Florida.
9. [Noah Goodwin](#) – Won twice on PGA TOUR Canada, now PGA TOUR Americas, in 2022 to finish third in the Fortinet Cup and earn status on the Korn Ferry Tour last season. Goodwin reclaimed status in 2024 with a T14 at Final Stage of Q-School after advancing through First and Second Stage.
10. [Sudarshan Yellamaraju](#) – Earned status on the Korn Ferry Tour with a T14 finish at Final Stage of Q-School. The young Canadian did not play collegiate golf and has never worked with a professional coach. He made 10 starts in Canada last season, making seven cuts with two top-10s.