

LA NACION > USA

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AP

PALM COAST, Fla. (AP) — Ben Kohles had one objective, and that was to lock up a PGA Tour card for 2027. He had two options and chose to follow his hunch.

Kohles, who won the BMW Charity Pro-Am the first week in June, was No. 19 on the Korn Ferry Tour points list heading into the Korn Ferry Tour Championship, where the top 20 earn PGA Tour cards for next year.

So he got on a plane to Japan.

“There was no real way of knowing what it was going to take points-wise,” Kohles said before going to the airport for the long flight home. “I was just betting on myself.”

It appears to have paid off. Kohles closed with a 3-under 68 in the Baycurrent Classic and tied for 17th, and those 48 points moved him to No. 80 in the FedEx Cup. He's not a mathematical lock to finish in the top 100, but with only five events left in the FedEx Fall — he's going to play four of them — he should be all set.

Kohles was 17th on the Korn Ferry Tour points when he chose not to play the last three events, instead going to the PGA Tour stop in Asheville, North Carolina , (tie for 15th) and Utah (tie for 13th), going from 96th to 84th in the FedEx Cup.

It was quite the juggling act.

“I looked it at like, I could play the last three Korn Ferry events and miss the first three in the fall and lock up my card. At the same time, I've been doing this long enough,” he said, pausing to chuckle. “The money is one thing — it's a little more on the PGA Tour — but knowing how I was playing, I thought I could move up in the fall standings.”

Kohles was coming off a poor year and had only conditional status. He started with nine Korn Ferry Tour events in his first 11 starts.

He got in the John Deere Classic and had a chance to win until he hit his approach into the water on the 18th, missed a long par putt to force a playoff and then went to tap in his meaningless bogey when that missed, too. That cost him 100 points and \$318,200.

“I take the positives from that,” he said. “Ever since then, my game has been in the best spot it's ever been. Everything is where I want it to be.”

A big turning point for Vaughn Taylor

Vaughn Taylor won his first PGA Tour Champions title , and to get a sense if winning still matters at age 50 or older was to see him start to choke up after his playoff victory over Alex Cejka in the Constellation Furyk & Friends.

It had been 10 years — 3,892 days to be exact — since Taylor beat Phil Mickelson in the 2016 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am . More worrisome was hip surgery from which Taylor never fully recovered. His last tournament was the RSM Classic to end 2022.

And then he turned 50 in March.

“I wanted to play some Korn Ferry before I came out here but didn't think I could physically do it,” Taylor said. “I had to understand what was actually going on with my hip. This year I've had a lot of help in understanding

what was going on, so just that in itself kind of made me believe I can physically do this. Just need to work on my mental game.”

It took nine starts before he cracked the top 10, and Taylor began contemplating career options.

“I wanted to give back to the game and thought teaching might be something that would do that,” Taylor said. “Been thinking about how could I get certified as a teacher. This changes that.”

Taylor made five straight birdies to start the back nine at Hammock Beach, felt the nerves over a three-putt bogey on the 17th hole and won on the second playoff hole.

“This is huge for me,” Taylor said.

Jackson Koivun has been a pro for four months and is going places

Jackson Koivun always had the belief, along with the No. 1 ranking in PGA Tour University and among amateurs worldwide. But it's been a lot to take in the last four months.

Not only did he win in his third start at the 3M Open , qualify for the PGA Tour postseason and get picked for the Presidents Cup at age 21 (he went 2-0-1 in a U.S. victory), Koivun joins Brooks Koepka on the new Motor City Golf Club team for the indoor TGL.

And now he's been selected to take part in the Skins Games on Black Friday, along with Koepka, Justin Thomas and U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark.

Koivun went to the SoFi Center for a photo shoot with Golf Digest and called it “truly a masterpiece of technology.”

Still to come is meeting Koepka, who doesn't live too far away from the Auburn alum's new home in the West Palm Beach area of Florida. But they'll see each other at the Skins Game.

That will be Nov. 27 at Atlantic Fields Club in Hobe Sound, Florida, at 9 a.m. on Prime Video (no subscription need), part of a long day on Prime that includes a college football game and an NBA doubleheader.

In the meantime, Koivun will keep busy. He plans to play three times in the FedEx Cup Fall, along with the mixed-team Grant Thornton Invitational two weeks after the Skins Game.

Furyk wearing two hats in the TV booth

Luke Donald is playing his sixth European tour event this week in India , giving Europe's captain a close look at potential Ryder Cup players for Ireland next year.

Jim Furyk isn't playing at all, but he feels closer than ever to his potential American players.

Furyk had a hip replacement and now has lower back problems that have kept him from playing since the PGA Tour Champions opener. But he is staying busy as ever with his role as a booth analyst for the Golf Channel. His workload increases next year, and that's just fine with Furyk.

"I'll be a much better Ryder Cup captain being out on tour, going to dinner with these guys, seeing them in practice rounds," he said. "And it'll make me a better analyst on TV, knowing the players that much better."

Divots

Miyu Yamashita's victory in the Aramco Korea Championship last week gave her titles on three tours this year — LPGA Tour, Japan LPGA and Ladies European Tour. ... Salem Country Club is getting three USGA championships over the next 15 years — the 2032 U.S. Mid-Amateur, the 2036 U.S. Senior Women's Open and the 2041 U.S. Senior Open, where Brooks Koepka, Patrick Reed and J.J. Spaun will all be eligible. ... Jon Rahm will play the Abu Dhabi Championship for the first time, the penultimate event on the European tour. ... Hockey great Mario Lemieux's son, Austin, shot his dad's jersey number (66) to qualify for the Butterfield Bermuda Championship.

Stat of the week

Michael Brennan's victory in Japan made him the third player in the last 30 years to have three PGA Tour victories in fewer than 35 starts. The others were Collin Morikawa and Tiger Woods.

Final word

"I'm too inconsistent to be bad all the time, so you're bound to have something good happen." — Paul Goydos.

See AP's full golf coverage [here](#)

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