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## First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF • CIBR

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Annual Management Report of Fund Performance  
December 31, 2023

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# **ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE**

## **December 31, 2023**

### **First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF (the “First Trust ETF”)**

This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete audited annual financial statements of the First Trust ETF. All references to dollars contained herein are to Canadian dollars.

Securityholders may also contact us to request a copy of the First Trust ETF's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosures relating to the First Trust ETF by calling 1-877-622-5552, by writing to us at FT Portfolios Canada Co., 40 King Street West, Suite 5102, Scotia Plaza, Box 312, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3Y2 or by visiting our website at [www.firsttrust.ca](http://www.firsttrust.ca) or SEDAR at [www.sedarplus.ca](http://www.sedarplus.ca).

### **Forward-looking Statements**

This document may contain forward-looking statements relating to anticipated future events, results, circumstances, performance or expectations that are not historical facts but instead represent beliefs regarding future events. By their nature, forward-looking statements are based on assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties. There is significant risk that forward-looking statements will not prove to be accurate. Readers of this document should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements as a number of factors could cause actual future results, conditions, actions or events to differ materially from the expectations, estimates or intentions expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. These factors include but are not limited to market and general economic conditions, interest rates, foreign currency exchange rates, the extent of industry sector exposure, the performance of the securities of the issuers held in the portfolio and regulatory developments and the risks detailed in the First Trust ETF's prospectus. The Manager does not undertake and specifically disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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# First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the year ended December 31, 2023

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#### **Investment Objective and Strategy**

The fundamental investment objective of **First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF** (the “First Trust ETF”) is to replicate, to the extent possible, the performance of an index of U.S. companies in the cybersecurity industry, initially the Nasdaq CTA Cybersecurity Index™.

The Nasdaq CTA Cybersecurity Index™ is designed to track the performance of companies engaged in the cybersecurity segment of the technology and industrials sectors. It includes companies primarily involved in the building, implementation, and management of security protocols applied to private and public networks, computers, and mobile devices in order to provide protection of the integrity of data and network operations.

#### **Risk**

The First Trust ETF provides exposure to its index by investing all or substantially all of its assets in an underlying U.S. index fund known as First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF (the “Underlying Fund”), which is managed by the First Trust ETF’s portfolio advisor.

The risks associated with an investment in the First Trust ETF is discussed in the First Trust ETF’s most recent prospectus.

#### **Results of Operations**

##### **General**

The First Trust ETF’s net asset value as of December 31, 2023 was \$37,747,260 or \$41.48 per unit. The First Trust ETF’s net asset value as of December 31, 2022 was \$26,275,764 or \$30.55 per unit.

For the year ended December 31, 2023, the First Trust ETF paid total cash distributions of \$0.0750 per unit. In addition, the First Trust ETF declared cash distributions of \$0.0950 per unit for record date of December 29, 2023 with payment date of January 8, 2024.

##### **Investment Performance**

For the year ended December 31, 2023, the First Trust ETF returned 36.38% compared to the S&P 500® Index (the “benchmark”) return of 22.90%. Unlike the benchmark, the First Trust ETF’s return is net of fees and expenses.

The First Trust ETF’s only holding, the Underlying Fund, held 32 equity securities as of December 31, 2023. The top ten equity holdings for the Underlying Fund accounted for 46.78% of the portfolio within the Underlying Fund.

The Underlying Fund outperformed the benchmark during the year primarily due to an overweight allocation in Information Technology, one of the best-performing sectors within the benchmark. Within Information Technology, an overweight allocation to software contributed notably to the strong performance. The performance was offset by negative stock selection within Information Technology.

The Underlying Fund’s top five stocks by contribution to return were Broadcom Inc., Palo Alto Networks, Inc., CrowdStrike Holdings, Inc., Zscaler, Inc., and SentinelOne, Inc. The Underlying Fund’s bottom five stocks by contribution to return were BlackBerry Limited, NetScout Systems, Inc., NCC Group plc, Juniper Networks, Inc., and OneSpan Inc.

The First Trust’s ETF’s exposure to the U.S. dollar contributed negatively to its absolute performance during the year as the U.S. dollar depreciated 2.39% against the Canadian dollar from December 31, 2022, to December 31, 2023.

#### **Recent Developments**

A major industry player, Okta Inc., experienced a data breach in October. A threat actor was able to use stolen credentials to view files uploaded by Okta customers and obtain personal information. Similarly in October, MGM Casino in Las Vegas was breached by hackers seeking personal information. The casino reports an estimated negative impact of \$100 Million from this incident. Cybercrime remains elevated as government agencies, hospital

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# First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the year ended December 31, 2023

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networks, corporations, energy companies and others face constant network threats. Companies must protect against corporate espionage, loss of client data, unauthorized computer access and much more at a time when more users are remotely connecting to networks outside of the traditional corporate firewall. Cybersecurity solutions must be dynamic as attackers quickly adapt to new solutions. Cloud solutions have been increasingly adopted and a new set of highly scalable businesses built on new security solution sets, such as zero-trust, have emerged and attracted large amounts of corporate spending. While new technology solutions must be protected, existing ones also require securing. This has enabled the market for cybersecurity solutions to continue expanding and offers investors securities with generally high growth rates relative to the broader market. Tightening economic conditions have made vendor consolidation an explicit focus for technology users and the cybersecurity industry remains highly fragmented and competitive. Platforms that can provide more comprehensive solutions should benefit but smaller, legacy, and niche cybersecurity companies may lose out as purchasers seek to reduce costs, headcounts, number of products and consolidate vendors. A recent Accenture survey found that more than half of organizations said cybersecurity is required before any digital transformations, revealing the importance of not treating cybercrime in a reactionary or incident-driven way. Recent discussion on personal liability for CEO's of companies with cybersecurity breaches will only reinforce spending in this area as a top priority for many companies. Within technology, Cybersecurity is expected to remain more defensive as the elevated threat profile induces companies to continue investing in security initiatives.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

FT Portfolios Canada Co. is the Manager of the First Trust ETF and is a Canadian affiliate of First Trust Advisors L.P., the investment advisor (the "Advisor") of the First Trust ETF.

Pursuant to terms of the declaration of trust of the First Trust ETF, the Manager provides or arranges for all management, administrative and other services required by the First Trust ETF. The Manager receives a management fee from the First Trust ETF. For further details, please see "Management Fees".

The Manager has retained the Advisor to provide certain services to the First Trust ETF pursuant to an investment advisory agreement. The Advisor receives advisory fees from the Manager out of the management fee.

# First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the year ended December 31, 2023

#### Financial Highlights

The following tables show selected key financial information about the First Trust ETF and are intended to help you understand the First Trust ETF's financial performance for the five years ended December 31. This information is derived from the First Trust ETF's audited annual financial statements.

#### Net Asset Value per Unit

CIBR	2023	2022	2021 <sup>(a)</sup>	2020	2019
Net asset value, beginning of year <sup>(1)</sup>	\$30.55	\$39.00	\$30.39	\$27.84	\$23.94
Increase (Decrease) from operations:					
Total revenue	0.18	0.09	0.50	0.38	0.43
Total expenses	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.16)	(0.27)	(0.28)
Realized gains (losses) for the year	(0.17)	0.75	4.29	(5.35)	2.04
Unrealized gains (losses) for the year	11.19	(8.45)	2.44	0.27	1.90
Total increase (decrease) from operations <sup>(2)</sup>	\$11.12	\$(7.68)	\$7.07	\$(4.97)	\$4.09
Distributions:					
From income (excluding dividends)	(0.17)	(0.01)	(0.21)	(0.25)	(0.32)
From dividends	-	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	(0.16)	(0.11)	-	-
Return of capital	-	-	-	-	-
Total annual distributions <sup>(3)</sup>	\$(0.17)	\$(0.17)	\$(0.32)	\$(0.25)	\$(0.32)
Net asset value, end of year <sup>(4)</sup>	\$41.48	\$30.55	\$39.00	\$30.39	\$27.84

(a) Effective February 17, 2021, the First Trust ETF is fully invested in the Underlying Fund.

(1) This information is provided as at December 31 of the years shown and is prepared under IFRS.

(2) Net asset value and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the year.

(3) Distributions were paid in cash or reinvested in additional units of the First Trust ETF, or both. Non-cash distributions are reinvested in additional units of the First Trust ETF and subsequently consolidated. Neither the number of units held by the unitholder, nor the net asset per unit of the First Trust ETF change as a result of any non-cash distributions.

(4) This table is not intended to be a reconciliation of beginning to ending net asset value per unit.

#### Ratios and Supplemental Data

CIBR	2023	2022	2021 <sup>(a)</sup>	2020	2019
Net asset value (000's)	\$37,747	\$26,276	\$32,757	\$4,559	\$2,784
Number of units outstanding	910,000	860,000	840,000	150,000	100,000
Management expense ratio <sup>(1)</sup>	0.76%	0.76%	0.76%	0.76%	0.76%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorption	0.78%	0.78%	0.78%	0.78%	0.78%
Trading expense ratio <sup>(2)</sup>	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.03%	0.05%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(3)</sup>	8.03%	42.90%	148.99%	431.90%	173.25%

(a) Effective February 17, 2021, the First Trust ETF is fully invested in the Underlying Fund.

(1) Management expense ratio is based on total expenses (excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) for the stated year, including the First Trust ETF's proportionate share of the MER of the Underlying Fund in which the First Trust ETF has invested, and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the year.

(2) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the year. This includes the First Trust ETF's proportionate share of the commissions of Underlying Fund in which the First Trust ETF has invested.

(3) The First Trust ETF's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the First Trust ETF's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the First Trust ETF buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher a First Trust ETF's portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading cost payable by the First Trust ETF in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between high turnover rate and the performance of a First Trust ETF.

# First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the year ended December 31, 2023

#### Management Fees

The First Trust ETF will pay the Manager a management fee of 0.15% based on the average daily NAV of the First Trust ETF. The management fee, plus applicable taxes including HST, will be accrued daily and paid monthly in arrears. The Manager may, from time to time in its discretion, waive all or a portion of the management fee charged at any given time.

*The First Trust ETF will bear the Underlying Fund's management fee of 0.60% per annum on average daily net assets on the First Trust ETF's portfolio assets invested in the Underlying Fund. Accordingly, the management fee cost to unitholders of their investment will be 0.75% per annum of NAV of the First Trust ETF plus applicable taxes. Effective February 1, 2024, the Underlying Fund's management fee is 0.59%.*

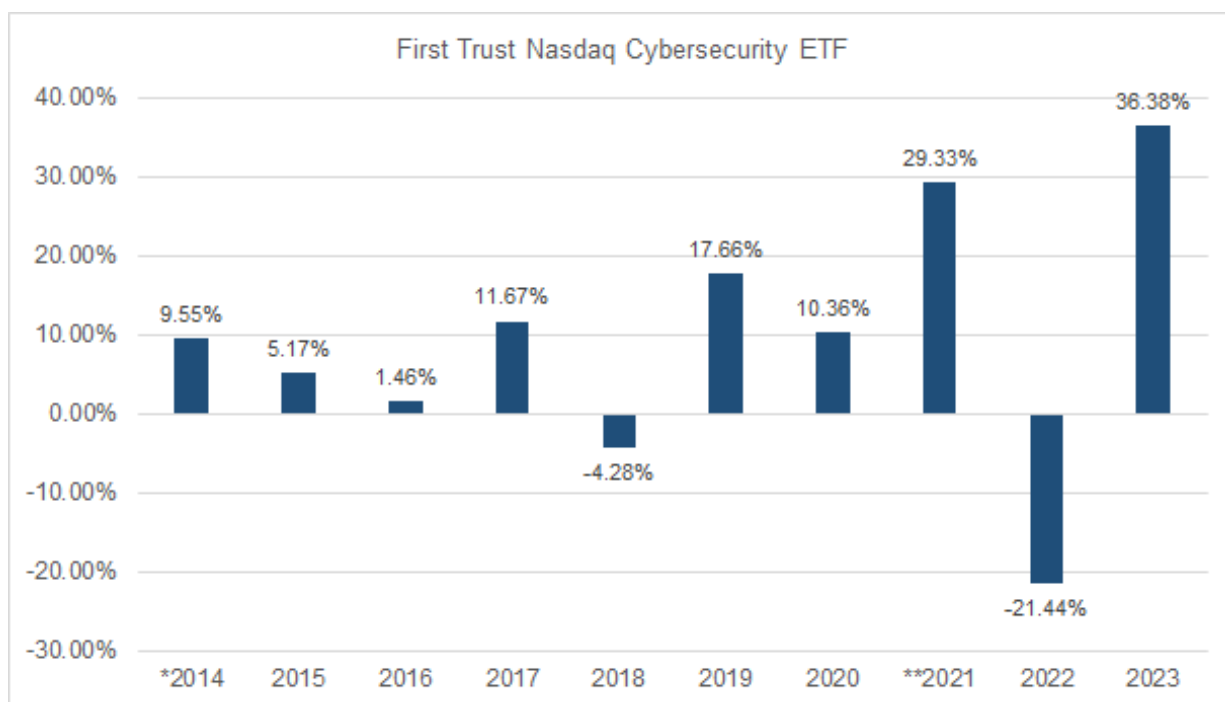
#### Past Performance

##### General

The past performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the First Trust ETF in the period/years shown were reinvested in additional securities of the First Trust ETF. The performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution or other optional charges that would have reduced returns or performance. How the First Trust ETF has performed in the past does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

##### Year by Year Returns

The bar chart below shows the First Trust ETF's performance for the years ended December 31, and for the period from commencement of operations to December 31, 2014 and illustrates how the investment fund's performance has changed from year to year. The chart also shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial year would have grown or decreased by the last day of each financial year.



\*First Trust ETF Commencement: October 30, 2014

\*\*Effective February 17, 2021, the First Trust ETF is fully invested in the Underlying Fund.

# First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF

## Management Report of Fund Performance

### For the year ended December 31, 2023

#### Annual Compound Returns

The table below shows the First Trust ETF's annual compound total return since inception and for the year ended December 31, 2023. The annual compound return is compared to the returns of the relevant benchmark; however, the First Trust ETF's return is net of fees and expenses. See Results of Operations section of this report for further information regarding the current year performance of the First Trust ETF relative to the benchmark.

Returns	1-year	3-year	5-year	10-year	Since Inception
First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF	36.38%	11.49%	12.47%	-	9.23%
S&P 500® Index	22.90%	11.27%	14.88%	-	14.21%

*S&P 500® Index is widely regarded as the best single gauge of large-cap U.S. equities and serves as the foundation for a wide range of investment products. The index includes 500 leading companies and captures approximately 80% coverage of available market capitalization.*

#### Summary of Investment Portfolio

The table below sets out the percentage (based on total net asset value) of the First Trust ETF's holdings as at December 31, 2023. This summary of portfolio holdings may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the First Trust ETF. Daily and quarterly updates are available at [www.firsttrust.ca](http://www.firsttrust.ca).

Holdings	% of ETF Total Net Asset Value
First Trust Nasdaq Cybersecurity ETF	99.97%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0.27%
Other Assets, Less Liabilities	-0.24%
Total	100.00%

#### Portfolio Breakdown

The table below sets out the percentage (based on total net asset value) of the First Trust ETF's portfolio as at December 31, 2023.

Breakdown	% of ETF Total Net Asset Value
Exchange-Traded Fund	99.97%
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0.27%
Other Assets, Less Liabilities	-0.24%
Total	100.00%



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