



## Honda LPGA Thailand

Siam Country Club (Pattaya Old Course) | Chonburi, Thailand | Feb. 23-26, 2023

### Final-Round Notes

Feb. 26, 2023

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**Course Setup:** 36-36—72; 6,335 yards

**Scoring Average:** R1: 69.388; R2: 69.807; R3: 69.945; R4: 70.432

**Weather:** Sunny skies with winds gusting up to 30mph in the morning and temps peaking at 94F

**Race to CME Globe Points:** 500 (winner)

**Purse:** \$1.7 million (winner's portion: \$255,000)

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LEADERBOARD			
		To par	Score
1	Lilia Vu	-22	66-70-66-64 – 266
2	Natthakritta Vongtaveelap	-21	67-65-64-71 – 267
3	Atthaya Thitikul	-20	67-69-64-68 – 268

#### LILIA VU VICTORIOUS FOR FIRST TIME IN LPGA CAREER AT HONDA LPGA THAILAND

On a windy day at Siam Country Club's Pattaya Old Course, it was American **Lilia Vu** who emerged victorious, winning by one shot over 54-hole leader **Natthakritta Vongtaveelap**. Starting the day at -14 and six back of the lead, Vu raced out of the gate, making two birdies in her first three holes. A string of pars from holes 4 to 7 cooled her off slightly, but then she rattled off a whopping five consecutive birdies from Nos. 8 to 12, in dogged pursuit of rookie Vongtaveelap. Vu made another birdie on the par-4, 15<sup>th</sup> to take a one-shot lead with four holes to play, ultimately grinding out four more pars to post an 8-under, 64 and become the season's first Rolex First-Time Winner. The victory felt like it was a long time coming for Vu, and after finishing T3 or better three different times last season, it's nice to finally have that weight off her shoulders.

"Feels really good to get it done. I feel like I put a lot of pressure on myself at the end of last year, and during the off-season I kind of just changed my mindset. Like I always knew I was going to win, I just got

to let it happen,” said the UCLA alum. “The more you hold onto something I feel like it gets further away. I came close a lot towards the end of the last season, so I was just going to have fun and play my game and it would eventually work itself out.”

Thai rookie Vongtaveelap struggled to stay steady under pressure on day four in Chonburi, Thailand. The 20-year-old birdied the first, seeming to be in total control, but a bogey on the second appeared to rattle her cage. She doubled the par-3, 4<sup>th</sup>, and after recovering with a birdie on hole 5, made another bogey at the 6<sup>th</sup>. Vongtaveelap made back-to-back birdies on Nos. 7 and 8 and bogeyed the 9<sup>th</sup> to turn in 37. She opened the back nine birdie-bogey-birdie on 10, 11 and 12, snagging another birdie on the par-4 14<sup>th</sup> to tie the lead with Vu with four holes to play, but Vongtaveelap closed with four pars, including one on the par-5 18<sup>th</sup> that saw her chip her third shot while on the green, ultimately posting at -21 and losing by one shot.

Two-time LPGA Tour winner **Atthaya Thitikul** couldn’t find the gas on Sunday, finally showing some life on the closing nine, making four birdies and no bogeys to card a 4-under, 68 and finish third. Despite the lackluster final day, Thitikul was pleased with her result and was incredibly grateful to play in front of a legion of fans in her home country. “I had a really good week this week in my hometown. Honda LPGA, it's always special event in my career,” said the 20-year-old. “Had good, positive vibes here for finishing today as well. Not getting there, but all the process has been in the right direction.”

Sweden’s **Maja Stark** and France’s **Celine Boutier** concluded their weeks inside the top-five, finishing in at tie for fourth at -17. Next week’s defending champion **Jin Young Ko** matched Vu’s 8-under, 64 to vault from T27 into a share of sixth alongside Rolex Women’s World Golf Rankings No. 1 **Lydia Ko**, major champion **Nelly Korda** and Ireland’s **Leona Maguire**. Defending champion **Nanna Koerstz Madsen** finished T38.

## A LOOK AT THE CHAMPION

CATEGORY	Lilia Vu
2023 Race to CME Globe Points List	2 (projected)
2023 LPGA Tour Wins	1
2023 LPGA Tour Top 10s (excludes wins)	0
2023 Season Earnings	\$255,000
Career LPGA Tour Wins	1
Career Ladies European Tour Wins	0
Career Epson Tour Wins	3
Career LPGA Tour Top 10s (excludes wins)	8
Career Money	\$1,177,769

## ABOUT THE CHAMPION

### Rolex Rankings No.33, Lilia Vu (1, 66-70-66-64)

- She hit 11 of 14 fairways and 11 of 18 greens with 21 putts
- Vu’s four-day total of 266 is her new career-low 72-hole total on the LPGA Tour, beating her previous record of 271 by five shots
- Her final-round 8-under, 64 is her second-lowest round ever on the LPGA Tour; she shot 63 at the 2022 Ascendant LPGA benefitting Volunteers of America

- Vu is the first Rolex First-Time Winner of the 2023 season
- Vu is the first UCLA alum to win on the LPGA Tour since **Ryann O'Toole** won the 2021 Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open
- With the \$255,000 winner's check, Vu surpasses the \$1 million mark in career earnings with \$1,177,769 earned
- She joins **Jessica Korda** and **Lexi Thompson** as the third Honda LPGA Thailand champion hailing from the United States of America
- This is Vu's first LPGA Tour event of the 2023 season; this was also her first appearance in the Honda LPGA Thailand
- This is her third season on the LPGA Tour; in addition to today's victory, she has eight other career top-10s
- Vu was a 2021 Epson Tour graduate; she made 15 cuts in 18 starts in 2021 including victories at the Garden City Charity Classic, Twin Bridges Championship and the Four Winds Invitational to finish first in the Race for the Card to earn LPGA Tour Membership for the 2022 season
- Vu is a graduate of UCLA; she was the low amateur at the 2018 Chevron Championship as well as the 2018 WGCA Player of the Year and Pac-12 Conference Golfer of the Year

#### THINGS TO KNOW

- This is **Jin Young Ko's** first time shooting all four rounds in the 60s and all four rounds under par since the 2022 Amundi Evian Championship
  - Her T6 finish is her best since last year's Amundi Evian Championship
  - Her final-round, 8-under 64 is her lowest 18-hole score since the 2022 Palos Verdes Championship presented by Bank of America at which she opened with a 64 on Thursday
- Sweden's **Maja Stark** earned her second top-five finish of the 2023 season
  - Stark finished T2 at the season-opening Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions
- Three Thai players finished inside the top 20, including **Natthakritta Vongtaveelap (2)**, **Atthaya Thitikul (3)** and **Jaravee Boonchant (T17)**
  - This is Thitikul's third consecutive top 10 finish in the Honda LPGA Thailand and her second top 5 in the event
- Defending champion **Nanna Koerstz Madsen** finished T38 in her title defense

#### QUOTABLE

**Lilia Vu on what it means to win this event, overcoming challenges in her first few years and what her late grandfather said to her about golf:** *"I think it was all a mindset change. I feel like technically my golf game got better, too, but it was all mindset. I was in a really negative mindset, even my rookie year out here. I didn't feel like I belonged. Felt like every shot was life or death. I would look at the ball and set up and wouldn't know where I was going to go because I was so nervous. Never felt like I belonged. And then I lost my card and then I was trying to finish out my year on (Epson) that 2019 year. Later on at the start of the pandemic, before COVID hit, that was when my grandpa passed away. I remember we were in Florida at one of the Florida Symetra events and we were flying home. I visited my grandpa before we even flew out and it seemed like he was doing really well. He was going to get release from the hospital. It was like the night before I left he told me in Vietnamese, go play well. Do your best. And then we came back from the Florida event and then we got -- my mom got a call from my aunt, Candy, that grandpa*

*was in the hospital again and was not conscious. And then he ended up passing away when we like -- we all went to the hospital then but he passed away later that day, and it just really hit me that I was in a bad spot with my golf, and the last thing he ever said to me was, play well. Like out of all the things, he's like struggling and he was thinking of me. I think that's what I think about every day."*

**Jin Young Ko on shooting four rounds in the 60s and under par for the first time since last summer:**  
*"it's been a long time to play (4 under par) rounds, like since last year, so, yeah. I work hard in Vietnam for winter training. Still hard work, too. So, yeah, I cried a lot last year in front of my parents, but, yeah, golf is a lot of ups and downs so we have to focus on my game and try to get better then better. I think it works."*

#### **NOTABLE**

[Two Thais Set to Tussle for Title at Honda LPGA Thailand](#)

[Celine Boutier Goes Long Looking for Win in Thailand](#)

#### **TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS**

18 holes: 62 (-10), Jessica Korda (second round), 2018; Yuka Saso (final round), 2022

36 holes: 128 (-16), Jessica Korda, 2018; Patty Tavatanakit, 2021; Nasa Hataoka, 2022; Su Oh, 2022

54 holes: 195 (-21), Nanna Koerstz Madsen, 2022

72 holes: 262 (-26), Nanna Koerstz Madsen, 2022; Xiyu Lin, 2022