



Dana Open

Highland Meadows Golf Club | Sylvania, OH | July 18-21, 2024

First-Round Notes

July 18, 2024

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Course Setup: 34-37 – 71; 6,510

Scoring Average: R1: 71.224

Weather: Dry with mostly sunny skies in the morning becoming partly cloudy for the midday and afternoon; winds will be northerly, with gusts into the 15-18 mph range at times and highs reaching near 76F in the afternoon and lows tonight fall to 55F

Race to CME Globe Points: 500 points (winner)

Purse: \$1,750,000; winner's portion is \$262,500

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LEADERBOARD			
	Player	To par	Score
1	Hye-Jin Choi	-7	64
T2	Aditi Ashok	-6	65
T2	Xiyu Lin	-6	65
T4	Chanettee Wannasaen	-5	66
T4	Natthakritta Vongtaveelap	-5	66
T4	Paula Reto	-5	66

HYE-JIN CHOI TAKES LATE FIRST-ROUND LEAD AT DANA OPEN

As the afternoon marched on at Highland Meadows Country Club, LPGA Tour players clawed for a spot at the top of the Dana Open leaderboard, but it was the Republic of Korea's **Hye-Jin Choi** who ended the day on top. Choi shot a 7-under 64 to take the first-round lead, just the second first-round lead or co-lead of her LPGA Tour career and her first since the 2022 Dana Open, where she ultimately finished T24. The 2022 Tour rookie took the solo lead on Thursday with a birdie on her final hole, jumping ahead of Olympians **Aditi Ashok** and **Xiyu Lin**, who finished at 6-under.

"It was really great day. I started a little weird, like my shot was not really great, so I try just to make the par," said Choi, who made seven straight pars to open her first round. "Try that until 7, and then I make the birdie on 8, so I think, oh, I can do very better."

Choi certainly did do better from there, collecting four straight birdies on holes 17, 18, 1 and 2. She added another birdie on five and closed out the round with two on eight and nine, sticking it to within 10 feet on the final hole and knocking her birdie putt into the back of the cup. Choi's bogey-free round, a great feat at Highland Meadows, was one of just four recorded on Thursday.

"I like it here, but this course, I feel not really easy this course," said Choi, who is making her third start at the Dana Open and has finished in the top 25 in each of the previous two years. "It's really tough course because green is a little bit hilly, and then the rough is really thick. So I thought it's really important for (good course) condition or something. Today was good."

Playing in the same group on Thursday, Ashok and Lin battled for a spot at the top of the leaderboard, each carding first-round 65s to take the clubhouse lead before Choi came in and ultimately ending the day in a tie for second. Both players will be teeing it up in their third Olympic Games next month, with Ashok representing India and Liu playing for the People's Republic of China, as will South Africa's **Paula Reto**, who held the lead after the morning wave at the Dana Open with a 5-under 66. She sits in a tie for fourth after round one along with Thai players **Natthakritta Vongtaveelap** and **Chanettee Wannasaen**.

Native Ohioans **Allie White** and **Stacy Lewis** shot solid 4-under 67s, as did defending champion **Linn Grant**. White is an LPGA Teaching and Club Professional who was exempt into the Dana Open field as the 2023 LPGA Teaching Professionals National Champion. The Lancaster, Ohio native, who is making her third start in the tournament, sank a 60-foot eagle putt on the par-5 17th hole that elicited a roar from her local fan following. Saying ahead of the tournament that her only goal was to make the cut, White sits in a tie for seventh, along with seven other players.

A LOOK AT THE LEADER

CATEGORY	Hye-Jin Choi
2024 Race to CME Globe Rank	26
2024 LPGA Tour Wins	0
2024 LPGA Tour Top 10s	0
2024 Season Earnings	\$640,086
Career LPGA Tour Wins	0
Career LPGA Tour Top 10s	15
Career Money (LPGA)	\$3,463,137
Career KLPGA Wins	12

ABOUT THE LEADER

Rolex Rankings No. 48 Hye-Jin Choi

- Choi hit 9 of 14 fairways and 14 of 18 greens with 25 putts

- Choi's 7-under 64 was bogey-free
- Starting on #10, Choi began her round with seven straight pars
- She had two birdies on the front nine and five birdies on the back nine
- Choi ended the round with two consecutive birdies to take the lead going into the second round
- Choi's first-round 64 is her lowest 18-hole score of the 2024 season and ties her second-lowest career round
 - Choi's lowest career round is 63
- This is the second first-round lead or co-lead of Choi's LPGA Tour career
 - She also held the first-round co-lead at the 2022 Dana Open alongside **Carlota Ciganda** and **Ruoning Yin**
 - She ultimately finished T24 that year
- This is Choi's third start at the Dana Open
 - She has never finished outside of the top-25
 - Results: 2023 – T23; 2022 – T24
- This is Choi's 17th start of the 2024 season
 - Choi has two top-10 finishes so far this year, including at T7 result at last week's major championship, the Amundi Evian Championship
 - Other top-10 results: Honda LPGA Thailand – T3, Blue Bay LPGA – 9
 - She has made the cut in 11 of her 16 previous starts this season
- She has 12 wins on the KLPGA Tour, including five in 2019 when she was the KLPGA's leading money winner

THINGS TO KNOW

- A pair of 2024 Olympians are tied for second at 6-under
 - India's **Aditi Ashok** went bogey-free with six birdies
 - She was one of four players to go bogey-free in their opening round at Highland Meadows
 - This is Ashok's seventh start at the Dana Open
 - She has made three cuts with a career-best finish of T7 in 2023
 - This is the second time she has opened with a 65 at the Dana Open
 - She first set the mark in 2017
 - People's Republic of China's **Xiyu Lin** saw eight birdies and two bogeys
 - Her eight birdies are the most among the field after one round of competition
 - She needed just 23 putts in her first round, the second least among the field
 - Only **Paula Reto** had less with 21
 - She is making her eighth start at the Dana Open
 - She has finished back-to-back years inside the top-10 including a career-best T4 finish last season
- Three players are tied for fourth at 5-under
 - South Africa's **Paula Reto** recorded a 66 during her first round
 - She had seven birdies on the card on Thursday and two bogeys
 - On holes 1-9, Reto only needed 9 putts
 - This is Reto's tenth appearance in the Dana Open and her first since 2022
 - This is her best opening round at the Dana Open
 - Her best 18-hole score at the Dana Open is a 65 in second round of 2021
 - Thailand's **Natthakritta Vongtaveelap** recorded her lowest opening round of the season and since the FIR HILLS SERI PAK Championship, a 68
 - Her opening round 66 tied her lowest career 18-hole score on the LPGA Tour
 - She first set the mark at the 2023 LOTTE Championship presented by Hoakalei, her second start ever
 - Her 66 is her lowest 18-hole score of the 2024 season
 - She previously shot a 67 at the Honga LPGA Thailand
 - This is her first start at the Dana Open
 - Fellow Thai **Chanettee Wannasaen** is also at T4
 - She carded six total birdies with one bogey
 - This is just her second start at this event; she missed the cut last season
 - Her opening round 66 is her best start since the JM Eagle LA Championship presented by Plastpro earlier this season
 - She also shot a 65 in her first round at that event
- **Alena Sharp** made a hole-in-one during the first-round at the Dana Open
 - Sharp hit her 6-iron 165 yards on No. 14, par 3
 - This is the third hole-in-one of Sharp's career and first since the 2009 season
 - This is the 14th hole-in-one of the 2024 season
 - CME Group donates \$20,000 for each hole-in-one made on the LPGA Tour in 2024, with a minimum guaranteed donation of \$500,000 to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which is leading the way in how the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and life-threatening diseases
 - The donation total is now \$280,000
- Defending champion **Linn Grant** finished the day -4 after a first-round 67
- Ohio natives **Allie White** and **Stacy Lewis** shot 4-under 67s on Thursday
 - White is an LPGA Tour teaching professional from Lancaster, Ohio
 - White recorded four birdies on Thursday and sank a 60-foot eagle putt on the par-5 17th
 - Lewis had three bogeys and seven birdies on the card, including four in her last five holes
- Sponsor invites:
 - **Erica Shepherd** ended her opening round 2-over and is tied for 101th
 - Texas A&M's **Adela Cernousek** is T27 after an opening round 69
 - She had five birdies and three bogeys
 - Her coach Gerrod Chadwell is on her bag this week
 - Chadwell is the husband of U.S. Solheim Cup captain Lewis
 - Ohio native **Mia Hammond** ended 5-over on the day and finished T132
- Monday Qualifiers
 - University of Findlay's **Mary Kelly Mulchay** is 3-over after her first start on the LPGA Tour and finished T113
 - **Jensen Castle** finished T132 at 5-over

QUOTABLES

Toledo native Stacy Lewis on how comfortable she felt out there and how the crowds were

“Crowds were good today for a Thursday. I was pretty surprised. A little cool start. And then the golf course, I mean they keep moving tees back on us every year. You would think it would play easier as the years go on but seems to play a little bit tougher. Had the north wind today, which makes some par-4s play pretty tough. Definitely not one of those golf courses you're always just super comfortable standing on every tee. You just try to do the best you can.”

Olympian Alena Sharp on her hole-in-one

“It was hole No. 14, and what did we have? 163 I think. 165. Hit a 6-iron. I think to hit just on the front and went in the cup. Yeah, I know that in the past that hole has been like a hole-in-one car, so I think I said the hole before, when Lexi won the tournament here she had a hole-in-one there. Weird that I actually had one right after saying that, like 20 minutes later. Yeah, good shot and it was on the pin the whole way. Yeah, happy with it. Haven't had a hole-in-one in a while.”

Ohio native and LPGA Tour Teaching Professional Allie White on her eagle today

“Yeah, you know, always great to have an eagle. Yeah, that was about my best drive the day. Really smoked it, about 280 and I had 240 to the pin. I knew my 3-wood would probably go over, so I was just going to try to really hit a hard hybrid. I pushed it a little bit and got a fortuitous bounce and bounced just over the sand trap. So it was on green and had a pretty difficult breaker downhill. I hit it and I was -- I hit it just how I wanted to, and then the fans in the beer booth behind me were like, you know, they were like, one time, as it was coming down the hill. Threw my hands up and it went in the hole. Yeah, we took it.”

Xiyu Lin when asked about playing in her third Olympics

“Yeah, obviously it's my third and likely be my last one. I wanted to give it 100%. That's why with the amount of travel I decided to take Evian off. Like that's the last time I would work on -- like have two weeks to work on my game. But going forward I feel like -- I heard lots about that course, and then I feel like it's going to be exciting. It's going to be nervous. It's going to be tough. It's going to be challenging. But I just going to give it all and then try to have the best time out there.”

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TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS AT HIGHLAND MEADOWS:

18 holes: 60, Paula Creamer (R1, 2008)

36 holes: 125, Paula Creamer (2008)

54 holes: 194, Nasa Hataoka (2021)

72 holes: 261, Se Ri Pak (1998)