



# CHAMPIONSHIP

## FM Championship

TPC Boston | Norton, MA | August 29- September 1, 2024

### Complete First-Round Notes

August 30, 2024

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**Course Setup:** 36-36 – 72; 6,397 yards  
**Scoring Average:** R1: 74.198  
**Weather:** Mixed skies throughout the day with northeasterly winds at 7-13 mph and temperatures reaching mid-70s  
**Race to CME Globe Points:** 500 points (winner)  
**Purse:** \$3.8 million; winner's portion is \$570,000  
**How to Watch:** [ESPN+ Featured Group Coverage](#) | [NBC Golf Channel TV/Streaming Times](#)

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LEADERBOARD			
	Player	To par	Score
1	Marina Alex	-4	68
T2	Allisen Corpuz	-3	69
T2	Haeran Ryu	-3	69
T2	Robyn Choi	-3	69
T2	Yealimi Noh	-3	69
T2	Nicole Broch Estrup	-3	69
T2	Lauren Coughlin	-3	69
T2	Jeeno Thitikul	-3	69
T2	Yuri Yoshida	-3	69

#### MARINA ALEX TAKES LATE FIRST-ROUND LEAD AT FM CHAMPIONSHIP

The first round of the inaugural FM Championship certainly got off to an exciting start, with several players clustering atop the leaderboard after a difficult day at TPC Boston. But, as the late afternoon rolled around, one player emerged ahead of the rest. **Marina Alex** opened the FM Championship with a four-under, bogey-free 68 to set the first 18-hole scoring record of the FM Championship and sit one shot ahead of eight players in second place.

Alex began her first round on the 10th tee at 1:21 p.m. ET and made two birdies within her first three holes, Nos. 11 and 12, to start the round off strong. She made three consecutive pars from holes 13 to 15 to stay at two-under before picking up one more birdie on the back nine at the par-3 No. 16. Making the turn, Alex kept herself in the conversation as the day neared its end and those at the top of the leaderboard struggled to break through -3. At one point during the round, ten players sat at -3 and T1 but all except Alex was able to sink that final birdie. For the LPGA Tour veteran, the lead-grabbing birdie came on the final par-5 of the day, hole 7. Now with a solo lead, she dropped two finishing pars to take the very first 18-hole lead at the FM Championship.

"I really like the course. Playing the practice rounds I felt like it set up well for my golf game, and it's dried out a little bit even from Tuesday and yesterday, so that's kind of helping me off the tee just get a little bit more distance," said Alex. "With that comes firmer greens, so it's definitely similar to conditions of courses that I played well at in the past. I think that kind of just is comfortable for me. Just felt like it wasn't so long that I was hitting long clubs in. I'm not the longest hitter, so being able to hit wedges and short irons despite the firmness of greens was helpful, and I managed my game really well today."

This is the third time Alex has held an 18-hole lead on the LPGA Tour. The last time she held the position, she went wire-to-wire and became a Rolex First-Time Winner at the 2018 Portland Classic. In Norton, MA, she is vying for her third LPGA Tour victory and first since the 2022 FIR HILLS SERI PAK Championship. She has posted three top-10 finishes this season, and currently sits at No. 58 in the Race to the CME Globe standings.

"It's hard. A lot of times it's easy to go down the rabbit hole, but I do know that not that long ago there has been good golf. Like Dana, Mizuho, ShopRite. You know, there has been really nice rounds of golf in there this year," said Alex on keeping herself focused mentality despite not shooting a round in the 60s since the second-round of the Dana Open in July. "It's just kind of really trying to be patient and waiting for the opportunity to show up. A lot of times you're trying to force it, make that good round happen every week, every day. That's the goal. You want to play good. Sometimes trying to hit a perfect shot or trying to do things when maybe you should just be accepting of par is better than forcing the issue."

Eight players sit in a tie for second place after shooting opening rounds of 69. Four players from the morning wave turned in 18-hole scores of a three-under par, including **Nicole Broch Estrup** and **Lauren Coughlin**. Estrup is making her sixth start on the LPGA Tour in 2024 and looks to beat her previous best finish of T3 at the Dow Championship, which she earned alongside playing partner **Nanna Koerstz Madsen**. A two-time 2024 Tour winner and currently one of the hottest players on Tour, Coughlin continued her summer of strong play with her sixth first-round in the 60s. Three-time LPGA Tour winner **Jeeno Thitikul**, who won the 2024 Dow Championship alongside partner **Ruoning Yin** and 2024 rookie **Yuri Yoshida** also shot opening round 69s on Thursday morning.

"The course is really nice. Like I think it's almost like a major course. Like it's a proper golf course," said Estrup on TPC Boston. "You need to, yeah, think your way around and you've got to be -- I mean, there is just not a lot of birdies out there and you can easily make bogeys. The greens are super fast, firm as well, so like my bogey on 17 I felt like I hit a good shot in. I pitched it probably 15 shy of the pin and it rolled over the green with a pitching wedge. I mean, it's hard out there, but I do like that, and I think, yeah, I like it when it's -- when you don't have to play super aggressive."

The other four players to join them from the afternoon wave were **Allisen Corpuz**, **Haeran Ryu**, **Robyn Choi** and **Yealimi Noh**. Choi was one of three players, including Alex and **Kristen Gillman**, to go bogey-free on Thursday. Corpuz was the last player of the day to come in with a 69 and is seeking her first victory since the 2023 U.S. Women's Open. Meanwhile Ryu, who has been the best LPGA Tour player in 2024 without a win, is searching for her first win since the 2023 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship despite five top-5 finishes already this season. Noh went 36, 33 to shoot a round in the 60s for the just sixth time this season, and is looking to improve upon her season-best finish of T8 at the Dow Championship.

"I think the big adjustment is coming over from Scotland really how slow they were and how fast they are this week," said Corpuz, who missed the cut last week at the last major of the year. "They always get a little bumpy in the afternoon, but I also felt like some of the pins weren't super accessible. Really just trying to make a good run at birdie and then walk away with par

With just one group still on the course, the first round of the FM Championship was suspended due to darkness at 7:35 p.m. The group of **Agathe Laisne**, **Sandra Gal** and **Muni He** re-started their first round from the 8th tee box at 7:27 a.m. and completed the round at 7:58 a.m. The second round began on time at 7:15 a.m.

#### A LOOK AT THE LEADER

CATEGORY	Marina Alex
2024 Race to CME Globe Rank	58
2024 LPGA Tour Wins	0
2024 LPGA Tour Top 10s	3
2024 Season Earnings	\$340,122
Career LPGA Tour Wins	2
Career LPGA Tour Top 10s	33
Career Money (LPGA)	\$4,654,624
Career Epsom Tour Wins	0

#### ABOUT THE LEADER

Rolex Rankings No. 121, Marina Alex

- She hit 11 of 14 fairways and 15 of 18 greens, with 29 putts
  - She is one of three players to go bogey-free through 18 holes (Kristen Gillman and Robyn Choi)
- This is her first round in the 60s on Tour since the Dana Open (R2, 66)
- This is the third time she's held an 18-hole lead on Tour
  - Also held the first-round lead at the 2017 CPKC Women's Open (T3 finish) and 2018 Portland Classic (Win)
- This is her 18th event of the 2024 LPGA Tour season

- She's posted three top-10 finishes: T9, Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions; T7, Mizuho Americas Open and T6, ShopRite LPGA Classic
- She's made two cuts in her last six Tour appearances
  - Has made 11 cuts total this year
- Currently ranks third in driving accuracy on Tour entering the FM Championship (83.02%)
- This is her 12th season on Tour
  - She is a two-time LPGA Tour winner: 2018 Portland Classic, 2022 FIR HILLS SERI PAK Championship
  - She was a member of the 2019 U.S. Solheim Cup Team
  - Finished T27 at Final Qualifying in 2012 to first earn LPGA Tour status
  - Epson Tour alum; has earned eight top-10 finishes on the Road to the LPGA
- As an amateur, played collegiate golf at Vanderbilt University
  - She is a two-time SEC Player of the Year, and was selected as a First-Team All-American in 2010 and 2012
  - She was inducted into Vanderbilt's Hall of Fame in 2015

#### THINGS TO KNOW

- The first round was suspended at 7:35 p.m. on Thursday due to darkness
  - With just one group still to complete their first round, the round resumed at 7:27 a.m. on 8 tee box
    - The final group consisted of **Agathe Laisne, Sandra Gal** and **Muni He**
    - The group completed their first round at 7:58 a.m.
  - The second round began on time at 7:15 a.m. Friday
- Eight players are tied for second at -3
  - Two-time 2024 Tour winner **Lauren Coughlin** recorded four birdies and a bogey in her opening round
    - She has finished in the top-10 in four of her last five starts, including two wins
    - Coughlin was just announced to the U.S. Solheim Cup Team later this September
  - **Robyn Choi** went bogey-free with three birdies in the first round
    - Choi was the medalist at the 2023 LPGA Q-Series to earn Tour membership for this season
    - Last season she competed on the Epson Tour and earned six top-10 finishes
  - **Yealimi Noh** recorded seven birdies, a bogey and a double bogey
    - She had one of the least number of putts on Thursday (25)
    - This is Noh's 18th LPGA Tour start this season
      - She has missed four cuts
      - Her best finish came at the Dow Championship
  - **Nicole Broch Estrup** had five birdies and two bogeys en route to a 69
    - This is her best round on Tour since the final round at the 2024 Portland Classic
    - This is just her sixth start on the LPGA Tour in 2024
      - She has missed one cut, the Amundi Evian Championship
      - She finished T3 at the Dow Championship alongside partner **Nanna Koerstz Madsen**
    - She has primarily competed on the Ladies European Tour this season
  - **Jeeno Thitikul** shot an opening-round 69 with six birdies and three bogeys
    - Thitikul is making her 11th start of the 2024 LPGA Tour season
      - Her first tournament of the year was The Chevron Championship due to a lingering thumb injury
      - She has six top-10 finishes including a win at the Dow Championship with partner **Ruoning Yin**
      - Four of those top-10 finishes were in consecutive starts from the Mizuho Americas Open to the Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give
    - She has three LPGA Tour victories including two in her rookie year (2022); JTBC Classic presented by Barbasol and the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G
    - Watch her first round highlights here: [Jeeno Thitikul First Round Highlights](#)
  - 2024 rookie **Yuri Yoshida** recorded four birdies and one bogey on Thursday
    - Her best opening round score is a 68, shot at the 2023 TOTO Japan Classic
    - This is Yoshida's 12th start of her 2024 season
      - She has missed six cuts thus far including in her last start, the Portland Classic
      - Her best finish was T16 at the Dana Open
    - She is currently ranked 16th in the Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year points list
    - She finished T7 at 2023 LPGA Q-Series to earn LPGA Tour Membership
    - She is a three-time winner on the JLPGA
  - 2023 rookie **Haeran Ryu** recorded just one bogey and four birdies in her opening round
    - Ryu has eight top-10 finishes this season including three top-five finishes in her last four starts
      - Five of her eight top-10 finishes are within the top five
    - She has one win in her career and was named the 2023 Louise Suggs Rookie of the Year
    - Watch her first round highlights here: [Haeran Ryu First Round Highlights](#)
  - **Allisen Corpuz** had five birdies and two bogeys in her first round of the FM Championship
    - This is her 19th start of the 2024 season
      - She has two top-10 finishes this season and is set to make her second start at the Solheim Cup
    - Coming into the week, Corpuz is ranked second on Tour in driving accuracy (83.44%)
    - Corpuz became a Rolex First-Time Winner at the 2023 U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally at Pebble Beach
- The four Massachusetts locals shot a combined + 6 during the first round
  - **Megan Khang** (Rockland, MA) went -2 to open the FM Championship and sits at T10
    - Khang is an FM ambassador and grew up playing golf in Mass.
  - **Alexa Pano** (Westborough, MA) shot an even par and is currently at T30
  - Sponsor invite **Alison Walshe** (Westford, MA) scored an 80 in her first LPGA Tour start since the 2023 Cognizant Founders Cup
  - **Xiyu Lin** (Seaport, MA) was even on the day
    - Lin's golf clubs, which have been stuck in Paris since Monday, arrived at 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday and she was able to use them during the first round
- Amateur sponsor invites **Elizabeth Rudisill** and **Yana Wilson** shot +3 and even, respectively
  - After 12 holes, Rudisill was -2 and near the top of the leaderboard but made three bogeys and a double in her last six holes
  - Rudisill won the AJGA Rolex Girls Junior Championship in June and is ranked Rolex AJGA Rankings
  - Last week, Wilson turned 18-years-old and finished in the top 95 and ties at Pre-Qualifying and will advance to the Qualifying stage of LPGA Q-Series
- **Jenny Shin** withdrew during the first round due to injury
- **Olivia Cowan** withdrew prior to the second round due to injury

#### QUOTABLES

*Lauren Coughlin (T2, -3) on her confidence since earning her first two LPGA Tour wins*

"It's just with the confidence that I know I can make a lot of birdies, and I've started to hit it well enough to where I'm hitting a majority of my greens and not really having to get up and down all that much. Most of it is probably making sure I don't three-putt a couple time on some of the longer putts I might give myself. Yeah, I think it's just -- I remember after Canada I was like, I want to do it again, so I was just thinking, keep doing what I'm doing, don't change anything. That's kind of been my whole thing."

*Jeeno Thitikul (T2, -3) on her top-20 finish last week*

"Feel pretty amazing with it. Feel like I said, every time I play the links course I always found it's hard, hard to play. But in different side, I think sometime it's easier because like you just -- what my job is just hit to the starting point. That will help you to get there. So I would say if I play like in St Andrews Old Course last three years, younger than this, I wouldn't play that good. Yeah, I guess I like play links more now. Yeah, like just really impressed I can play this good on the links."

*Alexa Pano (T30, E) on playing in front of a home crowd today at the FM Championship*

"It was definitely pretty cool on the first tee getting announced and having everyone there. It was kind of a challenging day on the course. The course is playing really tough. I didn't hit every shot how I wanted to, but that's golf. I kind of grinded it out today, so I was happy with that."

*Megan Khang (T10, -2) on hearing the cheers for her on holes 16 and 18*

"It was awesome. I was kind of frustrated missing the birdie putts on 11 and 12 from relatively close distances; probably the same distance, if not a little closer. You know, there was a family out there with two young girls and they made my day so much better. Even though I missed some putts they were still cheering for me. It was super cute. Every hole I would be walking off and she gave my two thumbs up. Little stuff like that helps me stay in a positive mindset. That's just a huge part of being at home."

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#### **SOCIAL SNAPSHOT**

[Patriots Marcus Jones and Bryce Baringer compete with the LPGA Tour star Alexa Pano](#)

[NHL Bruins join the LPGA Tour during the FM Championship pro-am](#)

[On the course with the Larry O'Brien Trophy](#)

[Moments with Megan Khang, our hometown hero for the week](#)

[A beautiful round for Lauren here at TPC Boston](#)

[Exclusive catch up with Lydia Ko on the Inside the LPGA Podcast](#)

#### **\*TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS AT TPC BOSTON:**

**18-hole: 68 (-4), Marina Alex (R1, 2024)**

**36-hole: TBD**

**54-hole: TBD**

**72-hole: TBD**

*\*This is the inaugural playing of the FM Championship and the first time the LPGA Tour has played at TPC Boston*