

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions
Lake Nona Golf & Country Club | Orlando, Fla. | Jan. 18-21, 2024

First-Round Notes
Jan. 18, 2024

Media Contacts: [Megan Santaniello](#), +1 (386) 405-1338, [Matt Jesus](#), +1 (402) 957-4674

Course Setup: 36-36-72; 6,447

Scoring Average: R1: 71.028

Weather: Cloudy to mostly cloudy skies in the morning with temperatures peaking in the lower 70s with winds, mostly southwest, around 5-10 mph

Race to CME Globe Points: 500 points (winner)

Professional's Purse: Professionals - \$1.5 million, \$225,000 winner's prize

Celebrity and Am Purse: \$500,000, \$100,000 winner's prize

TV/Streaming Times: [How to Watch](#)

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LPGA TOUR LEADERBOARD			
	Player	To par	Score
1	Ayaka Furue	-7	65
T2	Maja Stark	-5	67
T2	Gaby Lopez	-5	67
T4	Ally Ewing	-4	68
T4	Danielle Kang	-4	68

CELBILITY LEADERBOARD (MODIFIED STABLEFORD)		
	Player	Points
1	Annika Sorenstam	40
2	Jeff McNeil	38
3	Jeremy Roenick	36
4	Whit Merrifield	35

AYAKA FURUE STANDS ATOP FIRST-ROUND LEADERBOARD AT HILTON GRAND VACATIONS TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

It's official: the 2024 LPGA Tour schedule is in full swing at the season-opening Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions. Japan's **Ayaka Furue** fired a 7-under 65 to take the first-round lead on Thursday, two strokes ahead of **Maja Stark** and **Gaby Lopez**. Furue, who earned her place in this year's event after her 2022 Women's Scottish Open victory, went bogey-free, notching seven birdies on the day. She carded two in her opening three holes, hit 18 of 18 fairways and missed just one green in regulation. It's the first time she's held an 18-hole lead since the 2023 Meijer LPGA Classic, where she ultimately finished T13.

"All of my play today, that was really fantastic for me. I could make a lot of birdies and get closer to the hole," said Furue, whose 65 is her third time shooting 65 or better in the first round of an event over her Tour career. "I think that's the point [where] I could gain the result today."

Furue started the day with two birdies in her first three holes on Nos. 2 and 3, and carded another on 6 before three-straight pars to clear the front nine. She got rolling again with a birdie on No. 10, and managed to finished strong with three more on Nos. 14, 17 and 18.

"I feel this course is really difficult, and not only my shot but also my putt was really good today, so I think my putt was kind of excellent for me today," said Furue, in her second appearance in the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions.

Stark and Lopez finished with 5-under 67s to sit in a tie for second. Lopez, the 2020 HGVTOC champion, is starting to feel comfortable in her game again after an off-season that included [her wedding in Mexico and travels around the world](#). After starting the day on No. 10, she carded four-consecutive birdies in her opening holes, but ultimately finished with eight total to three bogeys.

"Lake Nona has been one of my favorite venues on tour. They have an amazing facility. The golf course is one of the top golf courses we play all year," said Lopez. "I love connecting with some of the celebrities and amateurs that I got to play in the past years. It's such a fun event. Very different, but it's a great warmup for the season."

Two-time Tour winner **Ally Ewing** is joined by 2022 champion **Danielle Kang** in a tie for fourth at posting 4-under 68s, while Lake Nona resident **Lydia Ko** is tied for sixth at -3 along with six other players that include defending champ **Brooke Henderson** looking for her first victory since last year's opening event.

"This tournament is so much fun. You get great pairings and great players and personalities. It was a lot of fun out there," said Henderson. "Started making some birdies on the back nine which made the day even better."

Rolex Rankings No. 1 **Lilia Vu** finished in a T18 at -1, while reigning Olympic silver medalist and 2024 Tour rookie **Mone Inami** shot a 75 in her first competitive round as a Tour Member. In the celebrity division, LPGA and World Golf Hall of Fame member **Annika Sorenstam** cruised to the top of the leaderboard with 40 points in the Modified Stableford format, with **Jeff McNeil** in second with 38 points and **Jeremy Roenick** in third with 36. Defending champion **Mardy Fish** is lurking in a tie for fifth with **Taylor Twellman** (34 points).

A LOOK AT THE LEADER

CATEGORY	Ayaka Furue
2023 Final Race to CME Globe Rank	10
2023 LPGA Tour Wins	0
2023 LPGA Tour Top 10s	8
2023 LPGA Season Earnings	\$1,637,334
Career LPGA Tour Wins	1
Career LET Wins	0
Career Epsom Tour Wins	0
Career LPGA Tour Top 10s	12
Career Money (LPGA)	\$2,595,165

Rolex Rankings No. 25 Ayaka Furue

- Furue hit all 14 fairways, 17 of 18 greens with 28 putts
 - It is the third time she has had a round with a perfect fairway percentage and at least 17 greens in regulation since the beginning of last season
 - **Lilia Vu** and **Ruoning Yin** are the only players behind her with two each
 - She went bogey-free with seven birdies, tied for second among the field
 - **Gaby Lopez** is the only player with more, eight
- Her 65 is the lowest round at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions since the event moved to Lake Nona in 2022
- This is just her second start at this event
 - Last year, she finished T18 and did not record a round in the 60s
- In 2023, Furue made 22 cuts in 24 starts with eight top-10 finishes
 - Her best finish came at the Bank of Hope LPGA Match Play presented by MGM Rewards where she came in second
 - Five of her eight top-10 finishes were inside the top-five
 - She finished the 2023 season ranked second in driving accuracy (84.76%) and fourth in rounds under par (56)
- This is her third season on the LPGA Tour
 - Since her 2022 rookie season, she has made 44 cuts in 52 starts with one win and 11 additional top-10 finishes
 - Her lone win came at the 2022 Women's Scottish Open
 - She has earned \$2,595,165 over her career, making her the eighth player from Japan to earn at least \$2 million on Tour during their career
- She has eight wins on the JLPGA Tour
- As an amateur, she won the 2019 Fujitsu Ladies on the JLPGA and turned pro shortly afterwards

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Maja Stark** and **Gaby Lopez** finished T2 after opening day of play
 - Stark had six birdies and a bogey
 - Stark is making her second start at this event
 - She finished T2 last season
 - Her first round 67 is her lowest round recorded at this tournament
 - Lopez led the field with eight birdies along with her three bogeys
 - Six of her eight birdies came on the back-nine
 - This is her sixth start at the Hilton Grand Vacation Tournament of Champions
 - Lopez finished T6 last season
 - She has finished in the top-10 in four of her last five starts
 - Lopez won this event in 2020 under the Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions
- **Ally Ewing** and **Danielle Kang** finished T4 at -4
 - Ewing recorded five birdies and a bogey
 - Ewing is making her fourth start at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions
 - She has not finished higher than T15 in her previous three starts
 - Her opening round 68 is her lowest opening round at this event
 - Her lowest round ever at this event is a 67 in 2021 in her fourth round
 - Kang recorded six birdies and two bogeys
 - She is making her sixth start at this event
 - She won this tournament in 2022 and has a runner-up finish in 2021 as well
- Defending Champion **Brooke Henderson** finished T6 with five birdies and two bogeys
- **Andrea Lee** was the only player hit all fairways and greens in regulation
 - She went bogey free with three birdies and is tied for sixth
- LPGA legend **Annika Sorenstam** leads the celebrity field with 40 points in the Modified Stableford scoring format
 - Sorenstam went bogey-free with four birdies
 - Sorenstam is one of the most decorated LPGA Tour Members with 72 wins and 135 additional top-10 finishes
- MLB All-Star **Jeff McNeil** (2, 38), NHL All-Star **Jeremy Roenick** (3, 36), MLB All-Star **Whit Merrifield** (4,35), Olympic Medalist **Mardy Fish** (T5, 34) and Major League Soccer All-Star **Taylor Twellman** (T5, 34) round out the celebrity top-five
 - Fish is the defending champion of this event

QUOTABLE

Defending champion Brooke Henderson (T6, -3) on what it took to find her groove:

“Shaking off some rust. You can play as much golf non-competitively, but when you get into the competitive rounds it's so much different. So trying to get back into the groove of things. The front nine maybe even par, a little bit up and down, but the back nine started to feel more like myself. I'm excited for the next three days?”

Gaby Lopez (T2, -5) on what allowed her to get off to the hot start:

“Yeah, sometimes when you come with low expectations you kind of relax a little bit, and that's always -- for me the start of the year kind of comes to that. But I also think that I've been hitting my irons -- for the last six months we had really good feelings, and, I don't know, I hit probably 17 greens today. Just giving lots of opportunities, and it comes to I think the mental preparation, just relaxing a little bit more than past years. Yeah, just kind of see where it goes and see what happens.”

Celebrity leader Annika Sorenstam (1, 40 points) on what was working so well for her today:

“Yeah, no, I'm super pleased with my round. Thought I hit the ball very well. Putted well, too. Just it's not that often nowadays that I have a round that I feel like I really made the most out of it. I did have a lot of chances too, but just made some good saves and rolled from some good putts. Hit a lot of fairways. I think I missed three greens. I know this is my home course, but still playing a little longer. It feels great to have a round where you're like I'm really, really happy. I think I made one mistake and recovered pretty quickly.”

Ayaka Furue (1, -7) on making her second start at the Hilton Grand Vacation Tournament of Champions:

“Yeah, I feel so happy to be back here again. This tournament is kind of different from other tournaments, like playing with celebrities, so I'm just excited, like just happy to be here.”

NOTABLE

[Ayaka Furue First Round Highlights](#)

[Brooke Henderson First Round Highlights](#)

[Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions First Round Highlights](#)

[Hally Leadbetter Mic'd Up](#)

[Walk and Talk Catch Up with Charley Hull](#)

[Gaby Lopez Has Incredible Off-Season Ahead Of 2024 On LPGA Tour](#)

[JM Eagle and Plastpro Announce Entire Tournament Field Of 144 Players To Receive Complimentary Lodging Accommodations](#)

[The Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational Unveils New Name: Dow Championship](#)

TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS

18 holes – 60, Jessica Korda (R3, 2021)

36 holes – 129, Danielle Kang (2021)

54 holes – 192, Danielle Kang (2021)

72 holes – 260, Jessica Korda (2021) and Danielle Kang (2021)