



Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G
Pinnacle Country Club | Rogers, Arkansas | Sept. 27-29, 2024

Second-Round Notes
September 28, 2024

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Course Setup: 36-35 – 71; 6,265 yards

Scoring Average: R1: 70.195, R2: 69.950

Weather: Mix of sun and clouds, dry conditions throughout the day; N winds, increasing to 12-18 mph this afternoon along with gusts in the 20-25 mph with temperatures topping out in the low 80s

Race to CME Globe Points: 500 points (winner)

Purse: \$3 million; winner's portion is \$450,000

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| LEADERBOARD | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|-------------|
| | Player | To par | Score |
| 1 | Ashleigh Buhai | -11 | 64-67 – 131 |
| 2 | Dottie Ardina | -10 | 65-67 – 132 |
| T3 | Arpichaya Yubol | -9 | 68-65 – 133 |
| T3 | Nasa Hataoka | -9 | 67-66 – 133 |
| T3 | Pajaree Anannrukarn | -9 | 66-67 – 133 |
| T3 | Gaby Lopez | -9 | 66-67 – 133 |

ASHLEIGH BUHAI SURGES TO THE TOP AT THE WALMART NW ARKANSAS CHAMPIONSHIP

After 36 holes at Pinnacle Country Club, two-time LPGA Tour winner **Ashleigh Buhai** is on the precipice of another victory as she holds a one-stroke lead heading into the final day at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G. Buhai sits at 11-under after carding a 4-under 67 on Saturday, one stroke ahead of her nearest competitor. The South African is looking to make it three straight seasons with at least one Tour title if she can find the winner's circle on Sunday in her 12th appearance in Hog country.

"I didn't expect any number. I never go into a tournament with a number in my head," said Buhai. "Obviously, it's renowned for more of a low-scoring tournament. Three days. Bit of a shootout. But the course is in great condition, and I think that's why the scores are really good."

Along with a double bogey on No. 8 and a bogey on No. 13, Buhai carded seven birdies on the day, including four in her closing five holes (Nos. 14, 15, 17 and 18). She is second in birdies made (15) through the first two rounds and is T3 in greens in regulation (32/36).

But one shot back of 35-year-old Buhai is **Dottie Ardina**, who first joined the LPGA Tour in 2014 and who is looking to become the season's fourth Rolex First-Time Winner in Rogers, Ark. Ardina followed up a first-round 65 with a 67 to sit within striking distance of her first Tour title and will almost double her official career earnings if she claims this week's \$450,000 winner's check. Ardina got off to a hot start, opening with a birdie on No. 1 and going birdie-eagle-birdie on Nos. 4-6 to go out in 31. After two bogeys on 11 and 12, she got one back with a birdie on 14 to get to 10-under for the tournament with 18 holes to play.

"I think I just need to be calm and just focus on my own game," said Ardina. "I always think play like a practice round because there is no pressure. I'm going to try to do that tomorrow, or I am going to do that tomorrow."

Four players sit in a tie for third at 9-under: 2018 and 2021 Walmart NW Arkansas champion **Nasa Hataoka**, two-time LPGA Tour winner **Pajaree Anannrukarn**, Thailand native **Arpichaya Yubol** and University of Arkansas alum **Gaby Lopez**.

Lopez shot a 4-under 67 on day two. Starting on the 10th, she made two birdies in her first three holes (10, 12). Then, on 14, a self-proclaimed bad tee shot that forced her to hit out of rocks and knock it into water ultimately led to a triple bogey on the par 5. But the 30-year-old rebounded immediately with a birdie on the next hole and went on to add five more birdies before a closing bogey on No. 9 to finish the day at 9-under overall.

"It's probably the best mental round that I've had. After having a triple bogey, it's so easy to kind of just lose yourself and lose patience. But just deeply, I feel that I'm playing very, very well. I feel that I'm making a lot of birdies, so I just told myself, hey, you're playing awesome. There is a ton of golf left," said Lopez. "Just tried to give myself a pat on the back and kind of keep the gas pedal down."

Jennifer Kupcho and **Lauren Hartlage**, who both shot the lowest rounds of the day (7-under 64s), lead an eight-player contingent in a tie for seventh at 8-under. **Jeeno Thitikul**, who won the event in 2022 to earn her second career Tour victory, was one of 12 players to go bogey-free on Saturday en route to a four-birdie 4-under 67.

There were 77 players who made the cut at 2-under, including former Razorback **Maria Fassi** (T15, -7) and winning U.S. Solheim Cup Team captain **Stacy Lewis** (T54, -3), as well as sponsor invite **Maria Jose Marin**. The sophomore at Arkansas, though four shots out of Buhai's lead at 7-under, is basking in the joy of her LPGA Tour debut, where a win would make her the sixth amateur ever to earn a victory on the LPGA Tour in its history.

"It feels like home. Everyone is cheering for you and supporting you no matter what you do, but because you're a Razorback," said Marin of the local support. "I think that's one of the main reasons I came here. Razorback community is just so -- like they stick together."

Notables to miss the cut at Pinnacle Country Club include defending champion Haeran Ryu, who shot rounds of 69-72 to miss the final day by one shot, as well as 2024 U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally champion Yuka Saso (T133, +5).

WITH A WIN

Ashleigh Buhai

- She would earn her third career Tour victory, and her first since the 2023 ShopRite LPGA Classic
 - She would still be the second-winningest South African on the LPGA Tour, behind Sally Little (15)
 - She would make it three straight seasons with a victory (2022 AIG Women's Open, 2023 ShopRite)
- She would earn the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship title in her 12th appearance
 - Her previous best finish at the event was a tie for 33rd
- She would be one of four players to win both the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship and the ShopRite LPGA Classic, both 54-hole tournaments on the LPGA Tour
 - Stacy Lewis (ShopRite, 2012 and 2014) (Walmart, 2014)
 - Ai Miyazato (ShopRite, 2010) (Walmart, 2012)
 - Seon Hwa Lee (ShopRite, 2006) (Walmart, 2008)
- She would be the 18th different Tour winner in 2024
- She would be the first winner from South Africa on Tour this season
- She would be the fourth different winner at age 30 or older on Tour this season (35 years, 4 months and 18 days), making it the first time since 2022 with at least four winners at 30 years or older in a single season
 - She would be the oldest winner on Tour since **Eun-Hee Ji** at the 2022 T-Mobile Match Play presented by MGM Rewards (36Y/16D)
- She would cross the \$5 million mark in official career earnings with the \$450,000 winner's prize (\$5,440,164)

Dottie Ardina

- She would be the fourth Rolex First-Time Winner of the 2024 season, joining **Bailey Tardy** (Blue Bay LPGA), **Linnea Strom** (ShopRite LPGA Classic) and **Lauren Coughlin** (CPKC Women's Open)
- She would earn her first victory in her 93rd total start of her LPGA Tour career; she made her first start on Tour in 2014
- She would be the fourth different winner at age 30 or older on Tour this season (30 years, 9 months and 27 days), making it the first time since 2022 with at least four winners at 30 years or older in a single season
- She would be just the third Tour winner representing the Philippines, joining Jennifer Rosales (2) and Yuka Saso (1)
 - Saso now represents Japan, and won earlier this season under the Japanese flag
- She would be the 18th different winner on Tour in 2024
- She would almost double her official career earnings with the \$450,000 winner's prize

- She entered the week with \$487,826 in official career earnings since joining the Tour in 2014
- She would be projected to move inside the top 60 of the Race to CME Globe standings
 - She entered the week No. 124 on the CME Points List

Arpichaya Yubol

- She would be the fourth Rolex First-Time Winner of the 2024 season, joining **Bailey Tardy** (Blue Bay LPGA), **Linnea Strom** (ShopRite LPGA Classic) and **Lauren Coughlin** (CPKC Women's Open)
- She would earn her first victory in her 40th total start on the LPGA Tour
 - She made her first LPGA Tour appearance at the 2022 ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open
- She would be the youngest winner on Tour at 22 years, 4 months and 26 days since **Chanettee Wannasaen** at the Dana Open (20Y/3M/5D)
- She would be the 18th different winner on Tour in 2024
- She would be the 8th different player from Thailand to earn at least one Tour title
- She would be the fifth player from Thailand to win on Tour this year, joining **Moriya Jutanugarn** (Portland Classic), **Patty Tavatanakit** (Honda LPGA Thailand), **Jeeno Thitikul** (Dow Championship) and **Chanettee Wannasaen** (Dana Open)
- She would cross the \$1 million mark in official career and season earnings

Nasa Hataoka

- This would be her seventh career Tour victory, and her first since the 2022 DIO Implant LA Open
 - She would remain the third-winningest player from Japan in LPGA Tour history, only behind Ai Miyazato (9) and Ayako Okamoto (17)
- She would be the first three-time winner of the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G
 - She won in Arkansas in 2018 and 2021
- It would be the 15th instance of a player winning at least three times at one course since 1992 (done so by nine different players)
 - She would be the first to win three times at a single course since **Amy Yang** (Siam Country Club's Old Course, Honda LPGA Thailand; 2015, 2017, 2019)
- She would be the third different player from Japan to win this season, joining **Ayaka Furue** (Amundi Evian Championship) and **Yuka Saso** (U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally)
- She would be the 18th different Tour winner this season
- She would cross the \$1 million mark in official season earnings with the \$450,000 winner's prize (\$1,043,019)
 - This would make it her fourth consecutive season with at least \$1 million in official earnings

Gaby Lopez

- This would be her fourth career Tour victory, and her first since the 2022 Dana Open
- She would be the fourth different winner at age 30 or older on Tour this season (30 years, 10 months and 20 days), making it the first time since 2022 with at least four winners at 30 years or older in a single season
- She would be the first player from Mexico to win on Tour in 2024
- She would be the 18th different Tour winner this season
- She would be the second University of Arkansas Razorback to win the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship, joining **Stacy Lewis** (2014); Lewis also won in 2007, when the event was deemed unofficial
- She would cross the \$1 million mark in official season earnings (\$1,015,674) and the \$5 million mark in official career earnings (\$5,229,151) with the \$450,000 winner's prize

Pajaree Anannarukarn

- She would earn her third career victory, and her first since the 2023 T-Mobile Match presented by MGM Rewards
 - It would be the first time she's earned Tour wins in back-to-back seasons
- She would join **Jeeno Thitikul** (3), **Moriya Jutanugarn** (3) and **Ariya Jutanugarn** (12) as players from Thailand to earn at least three career Tour titles
- She would be the 18th different Tour winner this season
- She would be the fifth player from Thailand to win on Tour this year, joining **Moriya Jutanugarn** (Portland Classic), **Patty Tavatanakit** (Honda LPGA Thailand), **Jeeno Thitikul** (Dow Championship) and **Chanettee Wannasaen** (Dana Open)
- She would cross the \$3 million mark in official career earnings (\$3,405,982) and \$1 million mark in official season earnings (\$1,181,155) with the \$450,000 winner's prize

A LOOK AT THE LEADER

| CATEGORY | Ashleigh Buhai |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 2024 Race to CME Globe Rank | 124 |
| 2024 LPGA Tour Wins | 0 |
| 2024 LPGA Tour Top 10s | 0 |
| 2024 Season Earnings | \$362,675 |
| Career LPGA Tour Wins | 2 |
| Career Official LPGA Tour Top 10s | 19 |
| Career Money (LPGA) | \$4,990,164 |
| Career Epon Tour Wins | 0 |

ABOUT THE LEADER

Rolex Rankings No. 56 Ashleigh Buhai

- Buhai recorded a 67 with seven birdies, a bogey and a double bogey
 - She hit 10 of 13 fairways and 16 of 18 greens with 29 putts
- She had four birdies in her last five holes to take the lead
- This was her eighth round of 67 or better this season
- This is the third time that Buhai holds the second-round lead/co-lead
- This is the second time that Buhai is holding the lead heading into the final round
 - She also held the 54-hole lead at the 2022 AIG Women's Open, where she went on to win and become a Rolex First-Time Winner
- This is her seventh appearance at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
 - She has missed the cut twice, including in her last appearance in 2022
 - Her best finish is T33 in 2019
 - Her lowest recorded score in the event is 66 shot three times – R1 2021, R1 2019, R2 2019
- Buhai is making her 18th start of the 2024 season
 - She has yet to record a top-10 finish
 - Her first-round 64 is her lowest score this season, besting a 65 in R1 of the Kroger Queen City Championship
 - She has missed two cuts this season, The Chevron Championship and the Cognizant Founders Cup
 - She withdrew from the Amundi Evian Championship due to a toe injury
- This is Buhai's 17th season on the LPGA Tour
 - She has two career victories – 2022 AIG Women's Open and the 2023 ShopRite LPGA Classic
 - She has made 270 starts on the LPGA Tour
 - She represented South Africa in the 2016 Rio and 2024 Paris Olympics
 - She was a rookie on the LPGA Tour in 2008

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Dottie Ardina** is solo second (-10) heading into the final round in Arkansas
 - Her 132 is a new career-low 36-hole score
 - Her previous best was a 134 (2023 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship)
 - This is her first time opening with back-to-back rounds in the 60s since last year's Walmart NW Arkansas Championship (68-66)
 - This is her sixth start at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
 - She missed the cut in her first three appearances at the event (2017, 2019, 2020)
 - Last year, she earned her first top-10 finish on the LPGA Tour (T10)
 - Ardina is making her eighth start on the LPGA Tour in 2024
 - Her best finish this year was a tie for seventh (Dana Open)
 - She has missed three cuts, including last week's Kroger Queen City Championship
 - She is in her sixth season on the LPGA Tour
 - Ardina has made 92 total starts, making 40 of those cuts
 - Her best finish on Tour was her T7 finish at the 2024 Dana Open
 - She has one additional top-10 finish, her T10 at the 2023 Walmart
 - Ardina is an Epon Tour graduate, and has competed in Epon Tour events every year since 2014
 - She has one Epon Tour victory, the 2022 Copper Rock Championship, and 26 career top 10s on the Epon Tour
- **Nasa Hataoka**, **Gaby Lopez**, **Arpichaya Yubol** and **Pajaree Anannarukarn** are tied for third at 9-under
 - Hataoka shot a 5-under 66, making it the fourth consecutive time she's opened with two rounds in the 60s at Walmart
 - She also went 64-65 in her first two rounds of her 2021 victory at Pinnacle Country Club

- This is her Hataoka's sixth round of 67 or better this season
- Hataoka is making her seventh start at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
 - She is a two-time champion of the event (2018, 2021)
 - She became a Rolex First-Time Winner at this event in 2018, and is one of three players to become Rolex First-Time Winners at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
 - Her lowest round is 63 at this tournament, shot in R3 in 2018
- This is Lopez's 12th time playing in the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
 - She competed in the event in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as an amateur while being a collegiate golfer at the University of Arkansas
 - Her best finish was a T10 in 2017
- Lopez is making her 19th start of the 2024 season
 - She has two top-10 finishes – JM Eagle LA Championship (T8) and last week's Kroger Queen City Championship (T7)
 - This is Lopez's ninth season on the LPGA Tour; she has three career victories – 2018 Blue Bay LPGA, 2020 Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions and 2022 Dana Open
- Yubol's second-round 66 makes it the first time she's opened with consecutive rounds in the 60s in her Tour career
- This is Yubol's 21st start of the 2024 Tour season
 - She's made 12 cuts, and earned two top-10 finishes (5th, U.S. Women's Open pres. by Ally; T6, FM Championship)
 - She shot a career-best 61 in the first round of the ShopRite LPGA Classic
- Anannarukarn is the only bogey-free player through 36 holes
 - The last Tour winner to go bogey-free was Jin Young Ko (72-hole event, 2019 CPKC Women's Open)
 - The last 54-hole event winner to go bogey-free was Sun-Ju Ahn (2015 TOTO Japan Classic)
- **Linnea Strom** made seven birdies in her last 10 holes (T7, -8)
 - She carded a back-nine 29, tying her season-low nine-hole score on Tour
 - A win would make her the fifth multiple-win player this season after becoming a Rolex First-Time Winner at the ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer, joining **Nelly Korda** (6 wins), **Lydia Ko** (3), **Lauren Coughlin** (2) and **Hannah Green** (2)
- **Kristen Gillman, Olivia Cowan** and **Mao Saigo** are also among those tied for seventh (-8)
 - All three players could become the season's fourth Rolex First-Time Winner with a victory in Arkansas on Sunday
 - Saigo would be the first rookie on Tour to win this season
- **Lexi Thompson** (T15, -7) has now shot four straight rounds in the 60s (R3, R4 Kroger Queen City Championship; R1, R2 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship)
 - The last time she carded four consecutive individual rounds in the 60s was between the Meijer LPGA Classic and KPMG Women's PGA Championship (R2-R4, Meijer; R1 KPMG WPGA)
 - This is her ninth appearance in the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship pres. by P&G
 - She's notched three top-10 finishes in her previous appearances (T8, 2023; T8, 2021; T3, 2018)
- **Maria Jose Marin**, a sophomore at the University of Arkansas, is also T15 (-7) after a second-round 70
 - If Marin were to win, she would be the first amateur to win on the LPGA Tour since Lydia Ko at the 2013 CPKC Women's Open
 - She would also be the sixth different amateur to ever win an LPGA Tour event, joining Polly Riley (1950 Tampa Open), Pat O'Sullivan (1951 Titleholders Championship), Catherine LaCoste (1967 U.S. Women's Open), JoAnne Carner (1969 Burdine's Invitational), and Ko (2012 and 2013 CPKC Women's Open)
 - She would be the fifth different sponsor invite to win on Tour since 2001, joining Hee Kyung Seo (2010 Kia Classic), Lexi Thompson (2011 Navistar LPGA Classic), Lydia Ko (2012 and 2013 CPKC Women's Open) and Rose Zhang (2023 Mizuho Americas Open)
 - She would be the eighth player in LPGA Tour history since 1980 to win in her first start in an official LPGA Tour event, joining Woo-Soon Ko (1994 Toray Japan Queens Cup), Karrie Webb (1995 Weetabix Women's British Open), Shi Hyun Ahn (2003 CJ Nine Bridges Classic), Jee Young Lee (2005 CJ Nine Bridges Classic), Kyu Jung Baek (2014 LPGA KEB Hana Bank Championship) and Hinako Shibuno (2019 AIG Women's Open)
 - She must turn professional to be eligible for LPGA Membership in either the current season or the season following her win
 - If she wants to remain an amateur for the balance of the year in which she wins, she can; she can then turn professional and accept Membership for the season following her win
 - Marin's dad and coach, Jose, is on her bag for the week
 - Marin was the 2024 SEC Freshman of the Year
 - She won the 2023 Blessings Collegiate Invitational, and will return to compete in the event next week
 - She won eight World Amateur Golf Rankings events in 2023, including the Mexican Women's Amateur and the South American Women's Amateur
 - Marin is also a two-time participant in the Augusta National Women's Amateur
 - She was awarded the sponsor's invite through the Road to the #NWACHampionship program that awards the top-ranked member of the Arkansas Razorback women's golf team an exemption
- **Yan Liu** notched two eagles in five holes (No. 18 and No. 14) on Saturday
- **Alexandra Forsterling** withdrew from the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship pres. by P&G following the first round due to injury

QUOTABLES

Dottie Ardina (2, -10) on whether she was checking leaderboards throughout her second round when holding the lead for most of the day:

"I wasn't. Actually, my caddie, I think we were on 8, he handed me the putter, he was like, do me a favor, do not look at the board. I'm like, okay. But it really helps. I try not to look at the board and just focus on my game."

Gaby Lopez (T3, -9) on what her mindset heading into the final round in contention:

"You know, kind of brings me back when Rory [McIlroy] had this tournament and he took the lead on the 71st hole. So you don't really have to have probably the lead until the last couple holes to give yourself a chance. As much as I want to be up there leading, I want to be just playing good golf. At the end of the day result is actually what I can't control. I can't control what the others do. I control my attitude and how I swing the golf ball and that's about it. Just trying to remind myself that a good break or not good break is out of my control."

Lexi Thompson (T15, -7) on seeing Ally Ewing make a similar retirement announcement to hers this week at Arkansas:

"It means a lot to me just that she's going on her own path and journey of happiness. She's such an incredible player and just even more importantly an incredible person that's been a great friend to me out here and we've shared some really special moments of just kind words. I consider her one of my good friends out here and sharing the Solheim moments together, especially last week, it was special. She deserves it. She deserves every bit of happiness, and I know a lot fans out here really do love her."

Pernilla Lindberg (T25, -6) on her memories over the years at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship:

"2009 was the first time I was here. I caddied for my good friend Karin Sjödin, Swedish player that was on tour back then. I was just waiting for Q-School that fall, so she asked me to come out. And then 2010 was my rookie year and I haven't missed a year since. I've been here for the last 16 years in a row now. I think the biggest thing is I think the community, how much they love having us here. We can really feel it. I don't think there is any other tournament where as many players and caddies are in host families inside the gates here. We have a full house this week, host family with three players, three caddies in there, so it's a fun week."

ON [LPGA.COM](https://www.lpga.com)

[Gaby Lopez Lurking Near Top of Walmart NW Arkansas Championship Leaderboard](#)

[A trio of Latina Caddies Looping at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship](#)

[What It Will Take to Contend at Pinnacle Country Club?](#)

LPGA VIDEOS

- Second Round Highlights
- Stacy Lewis Second Round Highlights
- Minami Katsu Second Round Highlights
- Pernilla Lindberg Second Round Interview
- Olivia Cowan Second Round Interview
- Linnea Strom Second Round Interview
- Nasa Hataoka Second Round Interview
- Gaby Lopez Second Round Interview
- Lexi Thompson Second Round interview
- Jeeno Thitikul Second Round Interview
- Lauren Hartlage Second Round Interview
- Dottie Ardina Second Round Interview
- Maris Fassi & Maria Jose Marin Second Round Interview
- Ashleigh Buhai Second Round Interview

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

[With some elite snacks and @nationalcarrental by their side, our players are always traveling in style](#)

[Locked in for Moving Day](#)

[Last year, a tap-in eagle on the 14th helped Haeran Ryu capture her maiden victory](#)

[WOO PIG SOOIE – Maria Fassi calls the hogs with her foundation, Fassi's Friends](#)

[Former Razorback Stacy Lewis is looking good in her first playing start since her win at the Solheim Cup](#)

TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS

18 holes – 61, Jeeno Thitkul (R2, 2022) and So Yeon Ryu (R2, 2017)

36 holes – 126, Anna Nordqvist (2020) and So Yeon Ryu (2017)

54 holes – 192, Nasa Hataoka (2018)