



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

Wednesday Pre-Tournament Notes  
September 25, 2024

**MEDIA AVAILABILITY SCHEDULE**

(All times are local Central time and subject to change; Zoom link available upon request)

Thursday, Sept. 26

11:00 a.m. – Stacy Lewis  
11:30 a.m. – Maria Fassi  
1:00 p.m. – Haeran Ryu  
Approx. 2:00 p.m. (following 8:40 a.m. pro-am) – Ally Ewing

**THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2024 WALMART NW ARKANSAS CHAMPIONSHIP PRESENTED BY P&G**

- This is the 18th playing of the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship pres. by P&G
  - Pinnacle Country Club has hosted the event since its inception in 2007
- The inaugural tournament, won by then-amateur and Razorback senior **Stacy Lewis**, is not official as it was reduced to 18 holes due to rain delays
  - Lewis went on to win the event again in 2014 while she was Rolex Rankings No. 1; she entered the final round four strokes off the lead
- Four past champions are in the field this week including **Haeran Ryu** (2023), **Jeeno Thitikul** (2022), **Nasa Hataoka** (2021, 2018), and **Lewis** (2014)
  - Ryu became a Rolex First-Time Winner at this event last year after finishing three shots ahead of **Linnea Strom**
    - Ryu went on to become the 2023 Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year after her successful first year on the LPGA Tour
    - This season, Ryu has accrued nine top-10 finishes and one win at the FM Championship
  - In 2022, Thitikul finished tied with **Danielle Kang** after 54 holes, and defeated Kang with a birdie on the second playoff hole
    - Thitikul tied So Yeon Ryu’s 18-hole tournament scoring record with a 61 in the second round in 2022
    - In 2024, Thitikul has earned one win at the Dow Championship alongside partner **Ruoning Yin** and enters this week following a runner-up finish at the Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G
  - Hataoka is one of the multiple winners of this event
    - She earned her first LPGA Tour victory at the event in 2018
    - She enters the week with three top-10 finishes this season, including a season-best tie for third at the HSBC Women’s World Championship
- The 2024 U.S. Solheim Cup captain, Lewis, is making her first start on the LPGA Tour since the U.S. Team was victorious at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club 15.5 to 12.5.
  - She led the U.S. Team to their first Solheim Cup victory since 2017, when they finished 16.5 to 11.5 over Europe
  - Lewis also captained the 2023 U.S. Team, when the European team retained the Cup in Finca de Cortesin, Spain in a 14-14 tie
  - In 2023, Lewis became the youngest captain of the U.S. Team at 38 years, seven months and six days
  - She was a player on the U.S. Team four times prior to her captaincy (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017)
- In addition to Lewis, there are two assistant captains and 14 players in the field that participated in the 2024 Solheim Cup
  - Assistant Captains Brittany Lincicome and Angela Stanford are making their 16th and 15th start of the 2024 LPGA Tour seasons
  - Seven U.S. Team members are participating including **Allisen Corpuz**, **Lauren Coughlin**, **Ally Ewing**, **Megan Khang**, **Jennifer Kupcho**, **Lexi Thompson** and **Lilia Vu**
    - On Wednesday morning, Ewing [announced](#) her retirement from professional golf following the conclusion of the 2024 season
    - Coughlin and Khang were one of four players to go undefeated at the 2024 Solheim Cup
    - Corpuz, Coughlin, Ewing, Khang, Kupcho and Vu are making their first starts since the Solheim Cup victory
  - Seven European Team members are in the field including **Celine Boutier**, **Carlota Ciganda**, **Georgia Hall**, **Leona Maguire**, **Emily Pedersen**, **Madelene Sagstrom** and **Maja Stark**
    - Each of these players was also a member of the victorious 2023 European Solheim Cup Team
    - Boutier, Ciganda, Pedersen and Stark are making their first starts since the 2024 Solheim Cup
- There are three Razorbacks in the field including **Maria Fassi** (2019), **Lewis** (2008) and **Gaby Lopez** (2016)
  - Fassi graduated in 2019 with a degree in Sports Management
    - She represented Mexico at the 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympics
    - During her time at Arkansas, she won the ANNIKA Award twice (2018, 2019) and the 2019 NCAA Women’s Division I Championship individual title
  - Lewis graduated in 2008 with a double major in Finance and Accounting
    - She is a 13-time LPGA Tour winner and two-time major champion
    - She has won seven LPGA awards including Rolex Player of the Year in 2012 and 2014
    - While at Arkansas, she won 12 collegiate events and was a four-time All-American
  - Lopez graduated in 2016 with a degree in Communications
    - She has three career victories on the LPGA Tour and most recently at the 2022 Dana Open
    - She has represented Mexico three times in the Olympics: 2016 Rio, 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris
    - In college, she won three events and played in the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G from 2013 to 2015 as an amateur
  - Although not in the field this year, Brooke Matthews graduated in 2021 with a degree in Marketing
    - Matthews just [clinched LPGA Tour Membership in 2025 through the Epson Tour’s Race for the](#) Card and will participate in the season finale, Epson Tour Championship, next week in Indian Wells, Calif.
- There are three sponsor invites this week including **Shyla Brown**, **Maria Jose Marin** and **Lilly (Thomas) Russell**
  - Brown is a 16-year-old old amateur that won the Kathy Whitworth Invitational in March to earn a spot in the field
  - Marin is a sophomore on the University of Arkansas women’s golf team
    - She is ranked No. 15 in the World Amateur Golf Rankings
    - In her freshman year, she walked away with SEC Freshman of the Year honors and won the 2023 Blessings Collegiate Invitational
  - Russell is an Epson Tour Member, making 16 starts this season with her best finish being T22 at the FireKeepers Casino Hotel Championship
    - She was a collegiate golfer at the University of Tulsa
    - She is a local to the area, and grew up volunteering at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G
- **Christina Kim** and **Gabriella Then** Monday qualified
  - Kim is an LPGA Tour veteran with three victories
    - This is her fifth start of the 2024 season, and the second time she Monday qualified into an event this season (Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give)
  - Then is making her seventh LPGA Tour start of 2024
    - She also Monday qualified into the CPKC Women’s Open and the ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer this year
    - Then has made 12 starts on the Epson Tour this year

**LPGA ON-SITE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**

Megan Santaniello  
Manager, LPGA Communications  
[Megan.mcguire@lpga.com](mailto:Megan.mcguire@lpga.com)  
+1 (386) 405-1338

Carly Lyvers  
Coordinator, LPGA Communications  
[Carly.Lyvers@lpga.com](mailto:Carly.Lyvers@lpga.com)  
+1 (386) 214-9105

**QUICK LINKS**

[Interview Transcripts](#)  
[LPGA Tour Online Media Center](#) (OMC): includes links to daily tournament notes, statistics and photo/video assets  
[LPGA Statistical Database](#): Request access to LPGA Tour data from 1980 to present  
[Stats Box](#): Includes all-time records, major records, purse breakdowns, stats documents, scoring files, points structures, and tournament histories  
[Media Assets](#): For access to tournament photos and videos, please contact the on-site LPGA Communications team  
[Tournament Website](#)

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**LPGA Tour**: @LPGA, @LPGAMedia (X), @lpga\_tour (Instagram, TikTok)  
**Tournament** - @NWACHampionship (X, Instagram)

**TV/STREAMING TIMES** (All times EST; Streaming available on NBCSports.com and the NBC Sports App

**Friday, Sept. 27**: 4:30-7 p.m. (Streaming Live)  
**Saturday, Sept. 28**: 2-5 p.m. (Golf Channel, Live); 8-10 p.m. (Golf Channel, Encore)  
**Sunday, Sept. 29**: 2-5 p.m. (Golf Channel, Live)

**2024 Statistical Leaders**

Official Money: Nelly Korda, \$3,676,930  
Scoring Average: Nelly Korda, 69.92  
Birdies: Haeran Ryu, 285  
Eagles: Gabriela Ruffels, 10  
Hole-in-Ones: 16 LPGA Tour players, 1  
Greens in Regulation: Haeran Ryu, 75.48%  
Average Driving Distance: Natthakritta Vongtaveelap, 291.56

## 2024 Award Standings

Rolex Player of the Year		
1	Nelly Korda	244 points
2	Lydia Ko	144 points
3	Ayaka Furue	124 points

Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year		
1	Mao Saigo	679 points
2	Jin Hee Im	625 points
3	Gabriela Ruffels	489 points

Rolex ANNIKA Major Award		
1	Nelly Korda	84 points*
2	Ayaka Furue	70 points
T3	Amy Yang	60 points
T3	Lydia Ko	60 points
T3	Yuka Saso	60 points

\*clinched

#AonRiskReward Challenge		
1	Natthakritta Vongatveelap	-0.938
2	Haeran Ryu	-0.912
3	Ruoning Yin	-0.885

Vare Trophy (Scoring Average)		
1	Nelly Korda	69.92
2	Ayaka Furue	70.06
3	Jeeno Thitikul	70.31

Race to the CME Globe Points		
1	Nelly Korda	3,735.819 points
2	Lydia Ko	2,500.258 points
3	Ayaka Furue	2,303.277 points

[Aon Risk Reward Challenge Hole:](#) No. 14, par 5

The 14th hole at Pinnacle Country Club is a dogleg left par 5 with sloping fairways and slight elevation changes, requiring precision from players throughout the hole, and plays drastically different depending on which tees are in play.

For each of the last three years, the tees have been moved up about 76 yards in the final round. Overall, the hole plays 0.34 strokes easier on average when playing from the forward tees. Players in contention will need to take this into consideration when coming down the stretch on Sunday. Depending on the tee, players must decide which club to take for their tee shot. Traditionally, the back tees are in use for rounds one and two. From there, players have prioritized position off the tee rather than distance, with less than 30% of players using driver. In the final round, players have decided to use driver from that tee 85% of the time, with the hole playing more than one-third of a stroke easier in relation to par based on tee movement.

After the Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G, **Natthakritta Vongtaveelap** moved up three spots to the top of the Aon Risk Reward Challenge leaderboard with an average to par of -0.938. **Haeran Ryu** follows her in second place with an average to par of -0.912, and **Ruoning Yin** moved down two spots to third place with an average to par of -0.885. Rounding out the top-five spots, **Lilia Vu** and **Kaitlin Milligan** are tied for fourth with an average to par of -0.875. At this week's Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G, each of the top five are in the field except Yin.

The Aon Risk Reward Challenge is a season-long competition across the LPGA Tour that highlights the game's best players as they navigate some of the most strategically challenging holes on Tour. Players will take their best two scores from each Challenge hole, with the winners having the best average score to par at the end of the regular season. The winning woman will take home the Aon trophy and a \$1 million prize.

### [Race to CME Globe Update:](#)

**Nelly Korda** continues as the No. 1 player in the Race to the CME Globe with just eight official events left of the 2024 LPGA Tour season. Korda has accumulated 3,735.819 points, which is more than 1,200 points of current No. 2 **Lydia Ko** (2,500.258 points). Ko is the most recent LPGA Tour winner after claiming her 22nd official victory at the Kroger Queen City Championship last week. The 2024 Amundi Evian Champion **Ayaka Furue** is in third place with 2,303.277 points followed by this week's defending champion at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G, **Haeran Ryu**, in fourth (2,259.392 points). Rounding out the top five, two-time LPGA Tour winner **Lauren Coughlin** is the fifth player in the Race to the CME Globe rankings to have at least 2,000 points (2,033.563 points).

Following last week's Kroger Queen City Championship, there are several notable moves in the Race to the CME Globe:

- **Lydia Ko** moved from No. 5 to No. 2 after earning her 22nd official LPGA Tour title
- **Jeeno Thitikul** moved from No. 11 to No. 7 after finishing runner-up to Ko
- **Yuka Saso** moved from No. 20 to No. 13 after her fourth-place finish
- **Albane Valenzuela** moved from No. 38 to No. 31 after her T7 finish
- **Gaby Lopez** moved from No. 69 to No. 59 after her T7 finish, the largest jump in the rankings this past week (10 spots) and she notably moved within the top-60 in the rankings

The Race to the CME Globe is a season-long points competition with LPGA Tour Members accumulating points in every official LPGA event to qualify for the season-ending tournament, the CME Group Tour Championship. The player who wins the CME Group Tour Championship is named the "Race to the CME Globe Champion." The top 60 points earners and ties earn a spot into the season finale with the entire field competing for a \$11 million purse, increased from \$7 million last season, and is highlighted by a \$4 million winner's check, which is the largest single prize in the history of women's golf.

### [CME Group Cares Challenge – Score 1 for St. Jude Update:](#)

The CME Group Cares Challenge is a season-long charitable giving program that turns aces into donations. 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. There has been a total of 19 holes-in-one (Members and non-Members), making the season total so far \$380,000.

### 2024 Wins by Country (25 tournaments, 8 countries)

11 – United States of America (Nelly Korda (6), Lauren Coughlin (2), Bailey Tardy, Lilia Vu, Rose Zhang)  
4 – Thailand (Moriya Jutanugarn, Patty Tavatanakit, Jeeno Thitikul, Chanettee Wannasaen)  
3 – New Zealand (Lydia Ko)  
2 – Australia (Hannah Green (2))  
2 – Japan (Ayaka Furue, Yuka Saso)  
2 – Republic of Korea (Haeran Ryu, Amy Yang)  
1 – Sweden (Linnea Strom)  
1 – People's Republic of China (Ruoning Yin)

### 2024 Wins by Player (25 tournaments, 17 players)

6 – Nelly Korda (LPGA Drive On Championship, FIR HILLS SERI PAK Championship, Ford Championship presented by KCC, T-Mobile Match Play presented by MGM Rewards, The Chevron Championship, Mizuho Americas Open)  
3 – Lydia Ko (Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions, AIG Women's Open, Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G)  
2 – Lauren Coughlin (CPKC Women's Open, ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open)  
2 – Hannah Green (HSBC Women's World Championship, JM Eagle LA Championship presented by Plastpro)  
1 – Ayaka Furue (The Amundi Evian Championship)  
1 – Moriya Jutanugarn (Portland Classic)  
1 – Haeran Ryu (FM Championship)  
1 – Yuka Saso (U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally)  
1 – Linnea Strom (ShopRite LPGA Classic presented by Acer)  
1 – Bailey Tardy (Blue Bay LPGA)  
1 – Patty Tavatanakit (Honda LPGA Thailand)

1 – Jeeno Thitikul (Dow Championship)  
1 – Lilia Vu (Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give)  
1 – Chanettee Wannasaen (Dana Open)  
1 – Amy Yang (KPMG Women's PGA Championship)  
1 – Ruoning Yin (Dow Championship)  
1 – Rose Zhang (Cognizant Founders Cup)

**Average Age of 2024 Winners:** 25.615

Youngest Winner: Chanettee Wannasaen (20 years, 3 months, 5 days)

Oldest Winner: Amy Yang (34 years, 10 months, 26 days)

**ON [LPGA.COM](#)**

[How to Watch the 2024 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G](#)

[Field Breakdown: 2024 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G](#)

[Five Things to Know about the 2024 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G](#)

[Brooke Matthews Secures LPGA Tour Membership for 2025 Through Epson Tour's Race for the Card](#)

[Inside the LPGA Podcast – Episode 13 | Lydia Ko Wins Again, Catch Up with Stacy Lewis](#)

**[LPGA VIDEOS](#)**

- Gaby Lopez Pre-Tournament Press Conference
- Lilia Vu Pre-Tournament Press Conference