



2026 Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass

Whirlwind Golf Club – Cattail Course | Phoenix, AZ | March 26-29, 2026

First-Round Notes

March 26, 2026

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Course Setup: 36-36—72, 6,510 yards

Scoring Average: R1: 69.606

Weather: Sunny skies with morning temperatures in the 60s warming to near 100F by the afternoon with light and variable winds most of the day between 3-8 mph

Race to CME Globe Points: 500 (winner)

Purse: \$2.25 million (winner's prize, \$337,500)

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

QUICK LINKS

[Interview Transcripts](#)

[LPGA Tour Online Media Center \(OMC\)](#)

[Tournament Website](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

LPGA Tour: @LPGA, @LPGAMedia (X), @lpga_tour (Instagram, TikTok)

Tournament: @ford_champ_ (Instagram, X)

LEADERBOARD

	Player	To par	Score
1	Lydia Ko	-12	60
2	Hyo Joo Kim	-11	61
3	Nelly Korda	-9	63
T4	Weiwei Zhang	-8	64
T4	Frida Kinhult	-8	64

COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 players went bogey-free in their first round
- 18 players recorded an eagle in the first round including three players that recorded two
- 74 players recorded a round of 60 in the first round, it is the most since the 2024 Ford Championship, 75
- Leader: **Lydia Ko** recorded a career-low 60 in her opening round
 - She went bogey-free with 12 birdies
 - Her 12 birdies are the most she has recorded in a single round since the 2016 CME Group Tour Championship (11)
 - It is the first time in her career that she has recorded double-digit birdies and also went bogey-free in a round
 - Set the new tournament 18-hole scoring record
 - Her lowest 18-hole score overall since the final round of the 2021 Chevron Championship, 62
 - Her lowest opening round since the 2022 Gainbridge LPGA at Boca Rio
 - Hit 17 of 18 greens in regulation and needed just 25 putts

- 40th time hitting 17 of 18 greens in regulation in her career, first since the 2024 CME Group Tour Championship in the final round
 - She ranks fifth in that category since joining the Tour in 2014
 - Her lowest 18-hole score at the Ford Championship in three starts
 - Fifth-straight round in the 60s at Wild Horse Pass
 - First opening round in the 60s since the Honda LPGA Thailand, third of 2026
- Second: **Hyo Joo Kim** went bogey-free with nine birdies and an eagle in her opening round
 - Her 61 ties her lowest 18-hole score, last done in 2014 at the Evian Championship
 - Fifth-straight round in the 60s at the Ford Championship
 - Hit 10 of 14 fairways, 16 of 18 greens in regulation with 24 putts
 - Won at last week's Fortinet Founders Cup
 - Became just the second player since 1980 to win an event in her teens, 20's and 30's joining **Inbee Park**
 - The third player since 2018 to win the week prior to attempt a title defense the following week
- Third: **Nelly Korda** bogey-free with seven birdies and an eagle in her first round
 - Hit 12 of 14 fairways, 16 of 18 greens in regulation with 26 putts
 - Second time starting a tournament in 2026 with a round in the 60s
 - 50th bogey-free round of her career
 - Third start at the Ford Championship, winner in 2024
- T4: **Weiwei Zhang** shot eight birdies in a bogey-free opening round
 - Only the eighth bogey-free round of her career, first of 2026
 - Second start at the Ford Championship, finished T33 last season
 - Third start of 2026
 - Finished runner-up at Blue Bay LPGA in her home country
 - Missed the cut her last time out at the Fortinet Founders Cup
- T4: **Frida Kinhult** recorded eight birdies and went bogey-free
 - Eighth bogey-free round of her career
 - Her first round in the 60s this season
 - Third start at the Ford Championship
 - Has not missed the cut in her last two starts
 - Lowest 18-hole score since the first round of the 2025 JM Eagle LA Championship, also 64
 - Third time recorded a round of 64, her career low
- **Jenny Bae** recorded her first career ace on No. 6
 - She hit her 9-iron 152 yards on the par 3
 - CME Group donates \$20,000 for each hole-in-one made on the LPGA Tour in 2026, 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 \$40,000

A LOOK AT THE LEADER

CATEGORY	Lydia Ko
2026 Race to CME Globe Rank	9
2026 LPGA Tour Wins	0
2026 LPGA Tour Top 10s	2
2026 Official Season Earnings	\$228.0K
Career LPGA Tour Wins	23
Career Official LPGA Tour Top 10s	118
Career Official Money	\$21.5M

ABOUT THE LEADER[Rolex Rankings No. 8 Lydia Ko](#)

- Making her third appearance at the Ford Championship presented by Wild Horse Pass
 - 2025 – T6, 2024 – T13
- 2026: Four cuts made in four starts, including two top 10 finishes
 - Best result is a fourth-place finish at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions
- Career: 23 wins, 118 top 10s, and \$21.5M in career earnings
 - Is the 25th player with 23 or more LPGA Tour victories
 - Is one of eight players of the top 25 on the Career Official Wins List to have recorded at least one win in the 2000s
 - A three-time major champion
 - Last major win was at the 2024 AIG Women's Open at St. Andrews
 - Is playing in her 13th season on the LPGA Tour
 - Is the only active player to be in the LPGA Hall of Fame
 - Earned her 27th and final point to be inducted into the LPGA Hall of Fame with her Gold Medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics
 - Became the Tour's 35th member inducted and first since **Lorena Ochoa** in 2022
 - Is the first active inductee since **Inbee Park** in 2016
 - Is the first inductee to hail from New Zealand
 - Is the second player from the Australasia region to be inducted into the LPGA Hall of Fame after **Karrie Webb** (Australia) was inducted in 2005
 - Is the youngest player to be inducted into the LPGA Hall of Fame under its current criteria, at 27 years, 3 months and 17 days
 - Webb reached the 27-point threshold at age 25 with her victory at the 2000 U.S. Women's Open but did not reach the 10-year requirement until age 30 in 2005
 - Has won multiple season-ending awards including:
 - 2024 Heather Farr Perseverance Award
 - 2015, 2022 Rolex Player of the Year
 - 2015, 2022 LPGA Tour season money winner
 - 2021, 2022 Glenna Collett Vare Trophy winner for the season's lowest scoring average
 - 2014, 2015, 2022 Race to the CME Globe winner
 - 2014 Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year, the youngest winner in the history of the

award

- Is a three-time Olympic medalist, the most of any golfer, man or woman
 - She has earned a silver medal (2016 Rio Olympics), bronze medal (2020 Tokyo Olympics) and gold medal (2024 Paris Olympics)

TOURNAMENT SCORING RECORDS

18 holes: **60, Lydia Ko** (R1, 2026)

36 holes: 130, Lilia Vu (2025) at Whirlwind Golf Club, Cattails Course and Hannah Green (2024)*

54 holes: 198, Lilia Vu (2025)

72 holes: 266, Hyo Joo Kim and Lilia Vu (2025)

*2024 tournament scoring records took place at Seville Golf and Country Club

QUOTABLE

Lydia Ko (1, -12) on her career-best 18-hole score of 60

“I think the number 59 did cross my mind by the time I holed my birdie putt on 6, but it wasn't like the pressure was -- like it wasn't like I had a lot of pressure to like break 60. It was just more like oh, it's really cool to be in this position. I think that's my career low score. I think the lowest score that I had before that is maybe at the Australian Women's Open maybe, somewhere along those lines. Yeah, definitely a fun round to have. I don't think I've ever actually started a round with four birdies, so it was nice to take advantage of the good start and continue that on my back nine as well. I think like as every golfer, when things go well you also think about the things that could go terribly wrong as well. I feel like I stayed patient and was rolling it really well. Yeah, I actually put in a new putter this week. Like I've had my old putter for a really long time, like the same model, so it was kind of different just to have something else. Lottie said on the second hole, like, oh, you got a new putter. I was like, well, at least I holed the first one so it was a good start. And maybe it's a honeymoon phase, who knows. But you take a more easy day like this on any occasion.”

Nelly Korda (3, -9) on what her strategy is this week when she can't use driver

“Just try to place myself in the right spots. Sometimes these fairways get baked out. Same with the greens. So closer doesn't always mean that it's good, just because then you have a tricky pitch shot in where you can't get too much spin on it and get it to stop so you try to lay back a little bit. Also there are some holes where it kind of necks in a little bit too much so you're trying to play for more of a percentage play where you still have a club in your hand that you can capitalize on and get it close.”

Esther Henseleit (T6, -7) on the keys to success of her round today

“Yeah, as you said, just really solid golf. Didn't really make many mistakes. Hit a lot of greens and the greens that I did miss were like just off the green, like a couple feet. So I think I only had two chips once today, which is quite nice. Yeah, just enjoyed it out there. Rolled some good putts. I do feel like it wasn't my best day tee to green but the putter definitely helped me out today.”

Jenny Bae (T10, -6) on her first career ace

“I don't really remember. It's all a blur. I think it was around 150 yards. I was trying to play 145. I hit a 9-iron and it came off the face really hot. The first thought I had was, oh, my God, it's going over. But like ten seconds later two people are whooping up there and my caddie is screaming and I'm like, what is going on? He goes, you got it in. So, yeah, I didn't get to see it which kind of sucks. First hole-in-one on LPGA so I feel really good.”

ON LPGA.COM

[Lydia Ko Posts Career-Low 60 and Only Leads by 1 Shot Ford Championship](#)

[Chasing Pack at the Ford Championship Includes a Pair of Past Champions in Hyo Joo Kim and Nelly Korda](#)

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SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

[ACE ALERT 🏠](#)

[A loooooong eagle putt for Ina Yoon 🦅](#)

[Approach game on point for Charley Hull 🎯](#)

[Earlier today, Lydia Ko shot her career best of 60 🙌](#)

[Albane Valenzuela chipping it right on in 😞](#)

[Sei Young Kim out here sinkin' em 🙌](#)

[Hyo Joo Kim stays HOT 🔥](#)

[Inches away from a 59 😞](#)