

Portland Classic

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Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

Farah O'Keefe

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joining us you ahead of 2026 Standard Portland Classic is Farah O'Keefe. Farah, you earned your place in this field through your NCAA Division 1 individual title. Take us back to that day and winning in this individual title at Texas.

FARAH O'KEEFE: Yeah, that was kind of a whirlwind of a day. I felt like everything and everything happened that day, anything and everything I guess.

I mean, that whole round was like -- it was really a grind from start to finish. Like I remember being on the first tee box and I hadn't really felt nerves on a first tee box this a while. It had kind of been like -- sometimes you get to the first tee and you're excited to be there. It's not so much nerves. But that day it was kind of like, okay, don't mess it up. You're in a good spot here. Don't mess it up.

Sure enough, I bogeyed the next hole, No. 2, and I was like, dang it. Not the hot start that I needed. But I've done so much work on the mental game that I remember walking off No. 2 being like, well you we're going to make a bogey today at some point, and I know that bogeys on par-5s kind of suck, but it is what it is. You'll get it back. It's a great golf course. You're playing great golf. Don't worry about it.

And I know I birdied one the next following holes and everything kind of like settled in a little bit to the round. Then I got to nine and I made this incredible up and down. Like I mean, I was short-sided in the bunker, up against the lip. Like I didn't even know if I was going to get out of the bunker and ended up hitting it to like nine on ten feet and made the putt.

That kind of got my momentum rolling for at least the next 30 seconds, because I made bogey on the very next hole, which is a par-5. So again, I was like, what am I doing here? I do remember walking on 11 tee box and it's right off the back of the green on No. 10. I was mad. I was really mad. I was all alone. Like Braden hadn't showed up yet, and so I was kind of mad. I hit a pretty bad shot into that left waste area. I kind of feel like that was the shot of the tournament that I hit out of that bunker.

At the time it didn't really seem anything special. Kind of felt like, oh, I've hit this shot 100 times. I know what I need to do here. But looking back on it, like that was such a crazy shot to try to hit in that moment. Really anything could have gone wrong.

But I pulled it off and Braden and I were looking at each other like that's not really where we were trying to go. We were trying to go for the lower tier and just have a putt at the hole. But it got really lucky and spun on that back shelf and I was able to capitalize and made birdie. So went birdie, birdie on 11 and 12.

13 made a really dumb bogey.

14, was when I thought the wheels were starting to fall off a little bit. I thought, oh, my gosh. I got over into that left fescue. On the tee box I was just thinking, don't hit it in the hazard. Like that's just the one place you can't go here, and of course pulled it way left and I'm in this fescue.

I was trying to punch it out and maybe have an easy chip right in front of the green, maybe get lucky and have a putt at birdie. Nothing heroic. Just trying to hit a normal shot. And I shanked it. It went into the hazard that I was trying not to go in with my drive, which was super unfortunate.

But all I could do was laugh, because I kept reminding myself like this is golf. You're going to make mistakes, especially on the last day of the National Championship. Like it's going to happen.

But I knew if I got to 17 and I was still at least within a shot or two of the lead that 17 and 18 were kind of going to be a little bit more attackable. In my opinion those are probably the two -- the way they had it set up -- the two most straightforward holes on that golf course.

And so that stretch from 12 -- well, 13, 14, 15 is probably one of the hardest stretches on the golf course other than that last portion on the front nine. I knew, okay, if I just get to 17 and I am still in a good spot maybe I can birdie the last two.



I ended up doing just that. That last putt on the last hole was kind of like, I don't know, my reaction was mostly like relief that I had like finally made a putt from outside of ten feet.

That it was -- had kind of ridden the waves a little bit and I didn't really let it get to me. But it was cool. I mean, walking off that back green and my coaches were there, mom was there, my mom was basically crying. Like it was just a cool moment.

My teammates were just so overjoyed and it was just really, really cool to be able to experience that all with them and just have that moment forever.

I look back at it -- it's funny, we were just talking about Ma-Jo and I played with her in that round. So played with her in the final round at the Darius Rucker where I also won and the final round of the national championship.

The picture that -- you know, with my arms up, I don't know, it kind of went a little bit around social media. They cropped it so you can't see Ma-Jo in the background, but I think Ma-Jo was more excited than I was. Her face was like beaming. That was just the coolest thing to play with the defending national champion on the last day. And to see that picture -- I sent it to her a couple days after the tournament. I was like, I didn't realize this wasn't the full picture, that you were happier than I was.

That's such a cool sports moment. We're going to be great friends for a long time. That's just a little nugget that may be people didn't know and it was really special.

Q. The elite amateur golf space is definitely a close community. You were talking about Ma-Jo. We just talked about Kiara Romero getting her LPGA card through LEAP. Just how does it feel to be out here competing on the LPGA Tour this week and then also staying so close with the girls you've been playing against for years at this point?

FARAH O'KEEFE: I think that's great. I mean, nothing makes me happier than to see my friends and my kind of competitors also succeed. Kiara just announced she's turning professional. I mean, I think we all kind of knew it was coming. We knew she would get there eventually. She's a great person, great player, and just beyond excited for her and where her golf is going to go.

It is going to be really cool to watch her on TV on Sundays, that's for sure. It's just cool to kind of see them outside of golf also, those people. Sometimes you just go have dinner with them, or on the Curtis Cup team we were just hanging out. It was just really special to just be around her

and the rest of the team and all those girls, like Anna Davis, Asterisk Talley just won the U.S. Women's Am.

So it was cool to be in that room. Sometimes you pick their brain a little bit. Sometimes you're just playing Jenga and trying not to mess up the tower. We are all still kids at heart. So it was a really, really cool week.

Yeah, Ma-Jo, I've known Ma-Jo for a while now. She's kind of like sneaky good. Like you wouldn't really look at her and be like oh, yeah, she's one of the best golfers in the world. But she's really worked hard and gotten really, really fit so that she can hit the ball far. She works -- I mean, man we were at on the putting green at the U.S. Open not this summer but last summer, and she was out there until literally it got dark just hitting putts.

I think that just speaks to how hard she works. This is a sport where you're trying to outwork everybody. You are trying to outwork yourself from the day before. So it's really neat to see how all of this kind of -- my group of girls, my generation, is coming through the game, what their work ethic is made of and how much respect they have for the game, for their competition, for what they're trying to achieve.

I think it's nothing but good for the future of the game. I'll tell you, even the generation behind us, they're the same way. They're frickin' good. Asterisk, Jasmine Koo is only a year younger than us, but still she's a good player. There is a great group of Canadians coming out of Canada right now, Clairey Linn. You can kind of go down the list. They're all super talented and super hard workers and really, really good people.

Q. You've had a really exciting year, a few individual wins in college as well as contending at Chevron this year. How do you continue to keep your focus on continuing to improve when there is so much attention on you and also just expectations that you're building each day?

FARAH O'KEEFE: Yeah, I think that -- I mean at the end of the day it's an individual sport and you just have to keep strive to go try it get 1% better every day. I saw a quote where it's like you're not trying to beat the other person. I think this is a Nick Saban quote. You're never trying to beat the other guy. You're always just trying to become the best version possible of yourself.

And so that really puts everything into perspective. Sometimes you play frickin' incredible golf and you lose and that's just the game. Sometimes it just happens. And so at the end of the day I have to remind myself that it's not really about wins and losses. It's about, okay, how good



can I get?

Whenever the day comes where I kind of felt like maybe, okay, I've kind of reached everywhere that I can go, maybe I am on the downward path now, I can't hit the ball as far, I'm sure that day will come, hopefully not soon, but it will come at some point, and that's kind of like, hey, I did everything right. Did everything I possibly could. Then just have to move on and kind of accept everything that's happened. Kind of close the door on this a little bit.

Seriously that's how you should approach every round of golf. Every shot that you hit is like, okay, that happened. I can't do anything about it now. Move on.

So that's really my perspective on golf. No matter what the finish is and really that's been something I've talked a lot about with everybody I have on my coaching team is just being able to kind of have a short memory. Accept what's happened. Move on.

Sometimes it's really good things that happen and you get to be in the spotlight for a second. Other times you did everything you could and wasn't good enough and that's pretty much it. I think I've had a really great year and it's because of the fact that I haven't put too much pressure on myself to be perfect, to be a winner, any of that. I just have really changed my focus to be more about, okay, what actually makes me feel good? What actually fulfills me at the end of the day?

Is it feeling like, okay, I won, or is it feeling like I did everything right? I didn't make anything -- even when I made a mistake I was able to talk to myself in way or keep my body language in way that made it -- I was able to move on and move on to the next shot.

That's really it. Try to keep it simple. Don't over-complicate anything. Really easy game to do that. You get in your head real fast. Just have to stay out of your own way.

Q. Bringing it back to this week, you've gotten to see the course at this point. You played in the pro-am today. What do you think is going to be important for you on the course this week and how would you measure success this week?

FARAH O'KEEFE: I think that really the biggest defense of this golf course is the tree-lined fairways. Everything is kind of right in front of you, which is nice. If you're off by couple yards on the wrong side of the fairway you're completely blocked out, so definitely going to be a fairways and greens kind of week.

Just keep it on the correct side of the fairway and then just try to hit the green. I know that in -- I looked it up, and in in years past it seems like the winning scores here have been pretty low. I am not going to except anything crazy out of myself. I am just going to go play my game and try to just plot my way around the golf course one shot at a time.

I think it would be a successful week if I did just that, if I walk away feeling like did I everything I could. Hit the best golf shots I could, did everything that's in my control and kind of move on from that.

But yeah, it would be nice it get maybe a LEAP point or two. That's just kind of a bonus. I can really only control what I can do right now, so that's pretty much my goal for the week.

Q. Last one from me: We are heading back into the school year. You've talked a lot about how important attending the University of Texas is to you and how important it is to play on that team. Can you just look ahead at the season this year and heading into your final year at Texas?

FARAH O'KEEFE: I'm really excited about that question and about this year. I think we have one of the best schedules in college golf right now. We're getting to play some pretty incredible courses and some pretty incredible fields. We have that joint LPGA event now at Nanea, which will be awesome, so looking forward to that.

We're playing St Andrews in the fall. We're playing the Stephens Cup at PGA Frisco. Then we are actually going to Nanea in the fall. I mean, we're just playing A++ golf courses all year, which is -- I couldn't ask for anything less. It's pretty awesome way to cap off my career at Texas.

Also, the team is changing quite a bit. Got a couple transfers, new girls, so that will be interesting to see what the team dynamic is. I've got the chance to know a little bit about each of them, and played with -- I didn't play with, but saw Isla last week at the U.S. Am, and, man, she's just cool. She's a cool cat. I don't know what else to say about her. Her brother is really nice.

It's just cool to get to know a couple new faces. I'm just pumped, and I think that our coaching staff has such a great respect for the players and what we're trying to kind of achieve at Texas. Never won a national championship in women's golf, and so it would be really big deal to bring that back to Austin, especially since I'm from Austin. It would mean a lot to me, and especially our community and just everybody who is a Longhorn fan.

It would just be really, really cool. I think our coaches are

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

making sure we're at least going to give ourselves the opportunity this year.

Anyway, yeah, I'm looking forward it to. I think it's going to be a great season. I think our coaches are super excited. I think all our girls are super excited. I think our entire athletic department is super excited.

I know we have a couple of our kind of admin people are like, can we go to St Andrews? Can we go with you guys? So that will be cool. We are playing in a couple events with our men's team also. So St Andrews is with them. Stephens Cup, they'll be there as well. So that will be cool to travel with them and see how they do things.

Going to be different without like Tommy and Christiaan and Luke, but it'll be really cool and I'm looking forward to the season.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. Thank you, Farah.

FARAH O'KEEFE: Thank you.

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