

# Fortinet Founders Cup

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Menlo Park, California, USA

Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club

## Rose Zhang

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the 2026 Fortinet Founders Cup. I am joined by past champion and local hero, legend here, Rose Zhang.

Rose, can you just open up, speak to how important it is to you to have this event here and what it's been like so far and what it will be like this week being able to play here?

ROSE ZHANG: It's been so incredible. Honestly I didn't expect there to be an event here at Sharon. I am right down the road and been going to classes the last quarter, so it's nice to not have to move out and situate all my things while I'm playing this event.

But I would say just coming back to playing this event has been a little weird just because you see like bits and pieces of you out there. I'm like, wow, that's definitely new. (Laughter.)

But I'm very grateful for the support that I have out here. I have a lot of family and friends out here, as well as friends that will be coming to watch. It's just easy to be somewhere that you're comfortable with and be with the people that also have been part of your circle and support this whole time.

But this week is finals week for me so I am finishing that up. Will be getting ready to roll by Thursday. Hopefully.

**Q. Rose, I know you've got a number of significant accomplishments on the golf course. How proud are you to have this accomplishment off the golf course?**

ROSE ZHANG: Honestly I think this was probably one of the most important achievements for my personal development as a person. I feel like there is obviously a lot of noise about whether it was a good decision or not.

Personally, I think when I turned pro end of sophomore year I've always envisioned wanting to finish, regardless of how difficult it would be, regardless of how much my body would break down or feasibility-wise how that would work.

Never really gave it a second thought. To see the end of the finish line coming very close, I'll be walking in June, so officially close for me, yeah, means the world.

**Q. How tough was it at times to keep the faith in that process and finish the race towards this degree?**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, that's a great way to put it. I would say I did have to put in a lot of time and energy into thinking about why I wanted to do these things, about why I wanted to play tour golf, go to college, everything in between.

So it was a big personal journey for me. I think when things get really tough and you're situated with 60 hours a week of class and work on top of sponsor days and traveling and still trying to practice for tournaments, I think the balance is very difficult. I had to learn what was the limit for me and what works best with having a really difficult schedule like that.

But most importantly it was important to keep the faith of this is a journey and this is how I'm supposed to grow and learn. That's kind of how I was able to come to this end.

But very close. Still not done, but very close.

**Q. How excited are you just to be Rose the golfer going forward and be able to focus on your professional career?**

ROSE ZHANG: For sure. I think I had to -- these last two, three weeks was when I had to come with the fact and sit with the fact that I will be Rose the golfer. I think for a long time I was always one foot into academia and one foot into the professional world and actually playing, but I've never really thought of myself as two feet into the pro career.

I'm not sure how it will turn out. I'm excited to see where it goes. If it's something that I'm still extremely passionate about I'm 100% going to dive all in. This whole year really in my opinion will be my first official rookie year of like, okay, this is where I'm going to take this game on and see how best I can do in the sport.



But, yeah, we're going to figure things out along the way. (Laughter.)

**Q. When is your last final?**

ROSE ZHANG: Funny enough I actually don't have finals, but I do have a ten-page paper that is due Thursday that I haven't started. So that is why I said we had a long way to go. That will be today and tomorrow.

**Q. What's the subject matter?**

ROSE ZHANG: Beer brewing. (Laughter.) No, honestly this quarter has been really fun for me because I've been taking a lot of interesting classes that haven't been part of my concentration. I'm a communication major but I've been very interested in international relations and political science.

Funny fact is I've taken weird classes like sleep and dreams, where you can sleep in class. Been taking beer brewing projects, labs. I've been trying to create peace models for Arabs and Israelis and Palestinians. That's been a heavy subject for this quarter.

But it's been interesting to dive into those things even though I'm not particularly an expert. This is why I'm learning.

**Q. Can you talk about what you learned from some of those classes, especially the beer brewing? That's very interesting and different.**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it's actually an archeology class. What I was looking into is after I did my own beer brewing, so with the mashing, the grinding of materials and trying to -- like apparently alcohol has been long dated back into pre-historic times and early civilizations, so we were diving into that. And then we were diving into actual like microgranuals with microscopes, so been looking at yeast, random molds. It's just, I don't even know.

It's out of sight out of mind right now. I'll dive back into it. I have to go through manicus fungi and figure that out, yeah.

**Q. Can you touch on how you're going to approach the paper? Are you going to wait? Run it through? Do it fast?**

ROSE ZHANG: I actually don't -- I don't really do well with like typing whatever comes to mind and then going back and editing. I like to create as I go. So like if I created the introduction, that is done.

Then for me it takes a little bit of time, but it makes me

think like, oh, I don't have to go back on it ever again. Like I just do a little run through, yeah, I did all of it, so it's okay. Yeah.

**Q. I was going to ask, you posted a lot about practicing in Stanford's facilities. How do you think it's helped you to continue practicing there and being around the team and still hang out with a lot of those same girls?**

ROSE ZHANG: It's been really inspiring. I think the girls are doing incredible right now. When I see like young energy and passion, the freshmen who are always practicing out there, and when I see like how the girls that I was on the team with are now seniors and so they're like basically the senior people to go to and they're leading the seem essentially.

When I'm seeing that dynamic I'm like wow that is super cool. If anything I'm very jealous of back in the day where like you could be on a team and you can be a little bit dumb and not know where to go, what to do. I think as you get older you just have more responsibilities on your shoulders and I look at them and I'm like, yeah, it's good to have a childlike approach to golf, to life, to learning, everything.

**Q. And you had your AJGA event recently. Similar sponsors I believe.**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah.

**Q. What does that mean to host that around here?**

ROSE ZHANG: It's been incredible. This place a super, super special to me. This is my second time hosting and I've been able to meet such great people and work alongside the AJGA to help these junior golfers pursue college, DI recruiting. A lot of them have been -- even at early age they experience a lot of the things that professionals experience from burnout to managing time to traveling everywhere and not actually having a set community or friends when they're in high school and 15, 17 years old, younger; some in middle school.

I'm like, how are you a 2030 something grad year? That's crazy to me.

But those girls also make me think back to how it's important for us as players, whether you're good or not, it doesn't matter, but you can always provide some sort of experience or some sort of personal connection with the younger generations. Those people are going to be the future of our game. They're going to be the future of our world, so to provide as much as you can to them, it's

important.

**Q. Along those lines, this event has an important piece with the Founders and the legacy they have left. Loaded question here: What does it mean to be acting like a Founder and how do you feel like you carried that out?**

ROSE ZHANG: I wouldn't say -- I say I'm still a little far off from acting like a Founder. I would say it's so important. When I was a rookie out here I already saw Beth Daniel, so many -- Nancy Lopez. A lot of them come out here, they act as mentors for all us professionals out there.

They've gone through the difficulties of bringing the women's game up and they've paved the way for us to be able to have opportunities to play these golf courses, to create a career out of the thing that we're passionate about.

And so when I think about those things, it doesn't matter how successful you are, going back to just giving as much to the younger generations is really what I see from the Founders.

And they're incredible. Like 13 bad boss women able to like dive into a male-dominated sport and be able to do what they did is incredible.

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