

# Aramco Saudi Ladies International Presented by Public Investment Fund

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King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia

Royal Greens Golf & Country Club

## Kelly Whaley

### Quick Quotes

**Q. There's dialed in, and then there's dialed in. Can you talk us through those eight holes?**

KELLY WHALEY: You almost black out when you do that, but I was just trying to stay -- I kept telling myself one after one until you're done. It's a long day, and it's a lot of holes.

So once I made about four or five, I said, okay, you're in it now. You can't stop. So just giving myself opportunities. It was a lot of fun. I think in these situations pressure can get to you, and it becomes almost daunting, but I really approached today trying to just enjoy every shot and find something about every hole that I loved, whether it be the view or just something.

**Q. Your caddie's as much a motivational speaker as a caddie. He was brilliant out there. Can you talk us through that. We arrived when the run stopped, so maybe we were the bad influence on that. Can you talk us through what do you remember of the holes? Can you talk us through some of the shots, some of the birdies that you made today?**

KELLY WHALEY: The par-5s out here I really tried to take advantage of. I birdied 4, 9, and they moved the tees a little bit. So it was a little more reachable for me today. Those were nice.

Really the nice ones were 10 and 11. The back nine are tricky, and the winds tend to pick up. The pins were tucked today, and they were hard. I really trusted my yardages. 11, I stuck it to eight feet, and 10 I stuck it to less than a foot. I mean, those are nice because you get up there and you're like, oh, okay, tap-in.

I was just proud of myself. I stuck to my game plan and hit some really close shots.

**Q. As far as talking through that there, it sounds like every club in your bag was just dialed in today. Was that the case?**



KELLY WHALEY: It was. You can always say it could have been better. It definitely could have. I left some out there, but I'm thrilled, don't get me wrong. I would say, even though I had a great score, there were some clubs that weren't dialed in, and I had some mistakes. I left one in the bunker on 17 and had to kind of grind it out.

So even though you have the best round of your career, there's still mistakes, which is just the crazy part about this game.

**Q. Some background detail, can you tell us about your career to this stage? Is this your first event outside the U.S.? Just talk us through.**

KELLY WHALEY: So I'm from Florida in the U.S., and I play on the Epson Tour. This is my second year. I went to college at North Carolina and played four years there. I have two individual wins. I turned pro in 2019. Both my parents were professionals, so I come from that background.

It's been a lot of fun. It's been a lot of learning. But this is my first international start over here. I've never really traveled for golf, so this has been such a fun journey just to learn and get to know the girls. It's such a welcoming Tour as well. I'm having a lot of fun, and I can't wait to maybe stay out here, hopefully next year or some point.

**Q. It must be difficult -- I bumped into this guy who was your agent or manager guy.**

KELLY WHALEY: Yeah, Preston.

**Q. He was saying it must be difficult because you came out in 2019 and COVID and stuff. Did that have an impact?**

KELLY WHALEY: It did. Luckily I graduated and got to go to Q-School. I know a lot of girls who graduated a year later didn't get to. That would have been worse, so I was lucky.

But it was tough. Obviously schedules got pushed. Events got cancelled. It kind of was a waiting game. Then when it did happen, you had all the testing and the travel restrictions. So it was definitely a grind and sometimes tiring.

It seems like starting -- I don't want to jinx it, but it's starting to get a little better. It was good. It was a good learning experience for sure.

**Q. After all that, you're ready to get going with your professional career?**

KELLY WHALEY: Today just feels great. I've been waiting for a day like today for a long time. You can kind of get in a rut in professional golf, I feel like, because it's one week after another. Starting the season like this is just unreal. I can't wait to keep going.

**Q. I think Nikola is the official word on this, but we think that's definitely an early tee record of eight consecutive birdies. I think you're one shy of the world record, which is Mark Calcavecchia. I had a quick Google, and he was at nine. A record breaker, how does that feel?**

KELLY WHALEY: It's great. Any record you break, you want to stay there. The athlete in me just wants to break it more. Just to have that to hold for maybe a short time, long time, it's super special.

**Q. And you were one shot away from a course record here. You equaled I think it's Georgia or Steph Kyriacou --**

KELLY WHALEY: Steph Kyriacou in 2020.

**Q. How does it feel to go out and equal the course record?**

KELLY WHALEY: Amazing. I got here Tuesday morning, and we came here right away. This is the most beautiful course I've played tournament golf this year, last year. It's just so special. I was telling them Golf Saudi and Aramco put on an amazing event. I hope I get the opportunity to play more because this was special, and I know all the girls really appreciate everything.

**Q. One last thing that was special was your fall out of the bunker on 18. It wasn't on camera. You're going to have to tell us what happened.**

KELLY WHALEY: I was in the bunker. Luckily, it was a high lip, no one saw. I'm walking back and just ate it. And I fell backward and just laid there. I was like I don't even know. It happened. I don't know what to do, so I'm just going to lay here and take a break. It would have made people laugh. Gosh, I swear I'm an athlete sometimes (Laughter).

**Q. You made us laugh, but you also thrilled us today. It was great to watch.**

**Q. Congratulations. It was a great round of golf. I'm assuming it was the best round of tournament golf**

**you've had, but it was certainly a record breaking round. What was going on?**

KELLY WHALEY: It is the best round I've ever had in a tournament. My whole goal today was to just enjoy it and have fun, being my first international professional event. I've never had eight birdies in a row. That's something memorable for anyone.

After about five, I was getting a little competitive with myself. You can't give up now. Try to birdie every hole. So that was more the fun of it. It was just a really memorable day.

**Q. Were your playing partners also sort of urging you on out there? I guess for them it must be quite something to watch as well.**

KELLY WHALEY: Yeah, we had a lot of fun out there. I think we kind of feed off of each other as well and just making the most of it while we're here.

**Q. This course is scorable once you sort of get the hang of it, get the hang of the wind. Once you were getting all those birdies, you must be thinking, oh, I can get a good top five, top ten position here?**

KELLY WHALEY: Honestly, I was trying to win even though it's really out of reach. In my mind, that's all I wanted. I really couldn't get myself to think about positions. I thought that was the right mindset.

Honestly, I was approaching each hole trying to birdie, and if not, try to make a nice par and keep going.

**Q. What does this do for your self-confidence going forward?**

KELLY WHALEY: It's incredible. I turned pro about two years ago. I'm from the U.S. It's been a journey. It's just so memorable to do it here, Golf Saudi and Aramco, I'm so grateful for this opportunity. His Excellency has been nothing but kind. I'm so grateful to be here and to get this experience before I go on to my dream of playing on the LPGA.

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