

# LIV Golf Chicago

Saturday, 9 August, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

## Fireballs GC

### Josele Ballester

#### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Josele Ballester from Fireballs GC. Well played today, 5-under par round of 66. You're currently 7-under for the tournament, tied second. Take us through your round today. What went well for you out there?

JOSELE BALLESTER: Yeah, pretty much everything went well. I was fortunate to start the day on two tough holes and draining a couple long putts. Those are always nice to see, especially early in the round. Then I kept it going. I was hitting it really good off the tee. It's something I've worked hard on the last few weeks and it's been paying off, and with the wind that we had today and even yesterday, being able to keep it low and put it in position was key, and it was key for me as well.

It was kind of a bummer to make that dumb bogey on 18, especially after a huge drive. But happy with how I closed 1 and 2, especially those playing into the wind. I think I hit some good shots towards the end of the round and really excited for tomorrow.

**Q. It's your fifth start on LIV Golf. You'll be playing tomorrow with Dean Burmester and Jon Rahm in the final group on Sunday. Are you surprised at how quickly you've adapted to playing on this league?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: A little bit, especially because my beginning in professional golf was not as good as I would have liked.

I think maybe there were some expectations outside that I didn't deal with that great, and I had to go back to my basics, the things that I did good and that made me the player that I am.

I've been working really hard over the last month. I know my potential. I know when I'm playing great, I can do good things. It's been great to see these past few weeks all the hard work paying off a little bit.

**Q. Fireballs are also leading the Team Championship**

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**this week. Describe how it is being a part of this team and looking for that win tomorrow.**

JOSELE BALLESTER: Yeah, I mean, looking for my first individual win out here, as well with the team, it's going to be really special. It's going to be super fun. At the end of the day, the cool thing about LIV is that we play for something bigger than yourself. It's something that I learned in college. Our coach always told us that, and we still have that mindset here on LIV, which is pretty cool.

Yeah, really excited for the test tomorrow. I'm super pumped to play with Jon. It's something that when I came to college here in the States, I always looked up to him, and being able to share a final pairing with him is going to be really fun.

**Q. You had mentioned the "dumb bogey." How would you describe it? Why was it dumb in your mind?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: Well, I hit a 410-yard drive. I was 20 yards from the green, and I hit four shots from there.

I know the shot wasn't easy because the angle was not the best. It was pretty downwind and the green was firm, so I knew I didn't have much space. Maybe that's something that I need to get better at, being more disciplined, and even on a 40-yard wedge shot being able to just aim five to seven yards right and accept that from that position I'm not going to make birdie.

I executed okay, didn't put the spin that I wanted and the ball just released over the green in the rough. I had a bad lie over there and hit a really good putt from six feet for par that lipped out.

I was honestly not expecting to leave that hole with a bogey after the drive that I hit.

**Q. Sergio was in here yesterday and he was talking about how you needed to be -- to get to a comfort level when you started out as a pro. Do you feel like you're so much more comfortable now than you were, say, in Virginia and Dallas?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: Yeah, totally, but it's funny how this goes because I think that I finished my position in

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college pretty good with the fourth spot in nationals and it was a confidence booster. For whatever reason I came up here to professional golf, and hitting it really hard. I felt like for the first time in my life, I was pretty far from my competitors, so I had to sit down with my people and discuss, okay, what do we have to do if I want to reach the level that I want to reach.

Again, maybe it's showing and it's paying off a little earlier than what I would have expected, but just enjoying every moment of it here.

**Q. If you win tomorrow, you'd be the youngest LIV Golfer to win an event. What would it mean to you to win something so young in your professional career?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: I don't think -- I wouldn't think that much on the age side. It would be more of like the accomplishment of starting my professional career in not the best way, and in two months turning it around and winning in fashion, again, especially being with Jon in the final pairing and with many great players. These are the moments that I practice for so much in my career, and being able to lift my first one tomorrow, it's going to be pretty fun.

**Q. You led the field in round 1 in strokes gained off the tee. Today I haven't seen it yet, but I'm sure you're definitely up there. Can you talk about how that driver has been a weapon for you, especially the last two events?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: Yeah, it kind of started in Valderrama honestly, I wasn't hitting it very great and we had that windy first day and I had to start keeping the ball low to put the ball in position. It kind of switched the mindset of how I'm hitting drivers. I have the length so I don't really worry about the distance that much, and I just started hitting like this mid-flight fade. My idea is almost like a compression like I would hit my irons, that same idea with the driver, and the ball is just starting a little left and curving to the right pretty much every single time.

It's funny because I've never been a guy that misses left, but I've been afraid of the left miss, and now I'm confident that I can aim left and the ball will curve where it should.

Yeah, I mean, when I'm good off the tee, as a good friend of mine said once, I'm dangerous, so hopefully I can keep putting it in position.

**Q. Not just off the tee today, there were a couple situations where you were in some tricky spots off the green. You got up-and-down. I think a lot of us knew you could hit the ball far, but the ability to get**

**up-and-down seems like it has gotten better from your first start until now. Why has that improvement taken place?**

JOSELE BALLESTER: Just work. I feel like professional world kind of exposed me a little bit in the areas that I was not as good at first. And yeah, in my case, around the greens and especially in the bunkers, I was not feeling very good pretty much this entire season, and I feel like I still don't feel as good as I would like.

But slowly working with a couple guys, just learning from all the the guys out here that are amazing, I started taking a few things that I could implement in my short game.

I've got to say, though, when you are playing great and you are hitting your drivers in position and you're not missing much and you're putting for birdie almost every time, subconsciously also your short game gets better. If my technique got a little better and overall I'm playing better, it's probably going to be a little easier to convert those up-and-downs.

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