

Portland Classic

Wednesday, July 31, 2024

Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

Victoria Gailey

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Victoria Gailey at the Portland Classic. So excited you're in the field this week. Just talk about how excited you are to be here and to experience all the things that come with this week.

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, it's my first LPGA Tour event. I'm so excited. It's in my hometown. I grew up watching this event, doing the standard bearing with Oregon Junior Golf and everything.

This is really where my dream of playing on the LPGA was born, so to be in the field this week is really surreal.

Yeah, dream come true for sure.

Q. What are some of your memories of the standard bearing? Do you remember any players that you followed? Any moments of like ah-ha, this is it, this is where I want to be?

VICTORIA GAILEY: I definitely remember getting some stuff signed from Morgan Pressel. I have a photograph when I was five with like my finish and everything. My mom scrapbooked it up and added the little Portland Classic logo and LPGA stuff and we had her sign it.

Yeah, really that's like one specific memory I have. Really there are like endless. I always remember coming out to this event.

And then it's kind of in the middle of our Oregon Junior Golf season, so after watching the girls out here I always felt jazzed up and inspired. It's a cool, the energy they have out here.

Q. An amazing resume at Nevada. Just talk about your journey since graduating to now.

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, so finished my fifth year at Nevada. Was defending my Oregon Am title from 2022 so I decided to stay Am until Q-School. Played in my normal tournaments and then went to Stage I.



I definitely felt the newness of that situations. I didn't make it through which I was really disappointed with at first, especially coming off my pro debut. I played in the Wild Horse Epson event in Pendleton which was super special to me. Made the cut there, so I was feeling ready to get at least Epson Tour status my first time around at Q-School.

Didn't work out that way me and I was, like I said, super disappointed at first. This year has actually turned out to be an amazing year. I've been playing full time on the Annika Women's All Pro Tour. I've gained some confidence. Learned how to do life on the road.

It's been great, even though it wasn't exactly how I pictured my first year as far as status goes. I honestly wouldn't have picked it any other way looking back now.

So that's been my year. I got a win, a second place, I'm in the Top 5 right now for season points on the WAPT.

Yeah, way better than I could have expected I guess my first year as a pro, and just feels really cool to be able to kind of cap off the year with my first LPGA Tour start here.

Q. Just talk a little bit too what you've learned most over that journey you just described.

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, I think a lot of has just been I'm playing in states that I've never been to before, so the golf courses are different.

The WAPT does a really good job I think of simulating the higher level tour course setups, so I've learned how to manage golf courses better just at the higher level.

My mental skills have been really put to the test and I feel like every week I've learned something new.

Yeah, really not one thing that I can just pick out. Definitely just developing those skills every single day and build up a lot over time.

Q. I was able to get into a lot of your Oregon Amateur events and just see how much you had won and how much success you had in like 2022 when you won the



Women's Oregon Amateur Championship, Oregon Public Links, and Oregon Tour Championship, along with some other events including a junior stroke play. How do you think those events helped prepare you for college and even now here in your first year as a pro?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, that summer, 2022 when I won the Oregon Am was a huge turning point in my golf career. That win at the Oregon Am, it's such a long week. It's qualifying and stroke play and then a bunch of matches.

That was like another one of my Bucket List things. If you're a golfer from Oregon you want to win the, Oregon Am, So when I was able to accomplish that, it really was a turning point in my career. It was like, gave me a ton of confidence.

And then I went into that college season for the fall and I won three times in a row which, again, I think was fueled by everything that I had learned in summer 2022 with those wins and the Oregon Am.

From there what was when my mindset kind of shifted from oh, I'm going to pursue something in my degree which I would be happy with and kind of leave the golf clubs behind into, oh, my gosh, I think I have something special to be able to make playing my career.

Q. What would you say your goals are moving forward with the Epson Tour or the LPGA Tour or just next steps for what you're focusing on now or maybe the next step after this?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, definitely after this tournament there is a chance I could go straight to Stage II with the WAPT Top 5 exemptions. I am missing the final event for WAPT to play in this this week. It was a tough decision.

Again this is my dream to be out on the LPGA and especially playing in this event, so it kind of was a no-brainer a bit. But still something I considered.

So I'll probably be heading back to Stage I, and my goals will definitely be to move on to Stage II and really just take it as far as I can this year. I've learned so much and I feel like I'm a completely different player than I was last year at Stage I.

Definitely securing status on Epson or LPGA, and, yeah, getting something for that 2025 year.

Q. Do you remember a time in your life when you didn't have golf involved being from a golf family?

VICTORIA GAILEY: No. Yeah, golf has been part of it

since the beginning. Everyone in my family golfs. There was times when golf wasn't the number one thing. I did a lot growing up when I was younger and it wasn't until like maybe sixth, seventh grade where I was like, okay, I think golf is what I want to focus in on.

Then really like transitioned into focusing on golf full time and thinking about getting a college scholarship in high school.

Q. Growing up in Tigard, you must have come to a few of these events over the years.

VICTORIA GAILEY: To this, the Portland Classic? Oh, yeah, all the time. Every single year we would be out here watching them, once I was old enough being able to do the standard bearing, being inside the ropes, doing the scores with my parents and my aunt.

And then even -- it used to be called the BBSI Junior Pro-Am, but on the Saturday after the cut they would always do a little par-3 situation over on the par-3 course here. That was really cool because we got to play like with an LPGA Tour pro and I was just a little girl.

To get to go watch them and play with them and have conversations, that was really awesome. So I have a ton of memories here being a fan.

Q. And there is little girls going to come throughout the weekend, too. How cool is it this opportunity to have an event like this on the tour here in your city? Got to see to believe, right?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yes.

Q. Just being able to have this event in your hometown keep you on that path to, I could do that too?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, it's so special that we have an LPGA event here. Not everywhere can say that. Like I said, my dream of playing on the LPGA was pretty much born here at the Portland Classic, so to have this event here and keeping it in Portland is just really special to me.

I have goals of like if I was to win like one event on the LPGA someday, it's going to be this one. I want to win in my hometown. It's really special for it to be here.

Q. You walked in this room and have been grinning ear to ear the whole time. Haven't wiped that smile off your face.

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah.



Q. What is the significance of this in your life to be done with school and look where you are?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, it's really a dream come true. I will get emotional if I dive too deep in. Sam, my boyfriend and caddie this week, we were talking about how once I tee off tomorrow I'll have played in an LPGA tournament and nobody can take that away from me ever.

So I'm getting emotional. Why do I always do this?

Q. Because you care?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, it's super special. Yeah.

Q. Go get 'em.

VICTORIA GAILEY: Thanks.

Q. What is your experience with this course? Have you played here a ton? Any other events you played here in the past maybe, too?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Yeah, so I've played it some. It's definitely not brand new. They held the Oregon Am here I think it was in COVID times, so 2019, so three or four years ago. So played it a ton that week and then always just being out here watching the tournament.

I came out here I think it was the day after I had gotten back from Q-School or maybe the day before I left or something. I remember I came out and watched. I've been around. I know the holes.

It's just a little different to actually be inside the ropes and playing it. Obviously the Oregon Am is not played from the LPGA setup, so I'm familiar, but it's not my home course.

Q. And then last question: What are you hoping to get out this week the most? A lot of players you're probably grown up watching here this week. Is there anything like that that you're kind of like hoping to watch and learn from some players or just take it all in being alongside them on the range and taking stuff from their games?

VICTORIA GAILEY: Definitely going to feed off this good professional energy and just try and rise to the occasion with all of them. They're really amazing and I have so much to learn.

I can just be a sponge this week really, just seeing how the girls I play with, how they play the golf course or their different mannerisms and stuff. And I can take I want and

leave what I don't.

Yeah, it's going to be a great week. I really am just going to try and learn as much as I can and use it as a really big motivator for me to work hard to get out here full time.

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