

Portland Classic

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

Juli Inkster

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center at the Standard Portland Classic in 2025 here. I'm joined by Juli Inkster, former champion of this event, LPGA Hall of Famer, and several accolades to add to that list.

First off, teeing it up this week. Just talk to us about why you want to play this week and what the purpose was behind it.

JULI INKSTER: Well, my Inkster Award winner Carolina Chacarra was going to be here anyway, and next week is our USGA Seniors and I've played one tournament where I've had to putt them all out and that was in Toledo in a year. I thought it would be good to come up and get some reps in.

I was going to have to be here anyway for Carolina. That's why I decided to play.

Q. And can you just speak to this event, too? You're a past champion of this event in 1999. What do you remember most about that win?

JULI INKSTER: Well, Portland has always been close to my heart, one, because of that, and two, my husband's family grew up in Milwaukie and still have a lot family here.

I've been coming back up here since I was a rookie, in think '83 and then '84 my first full rookie year. I just love the area, the people, the golf course.

You know, Tom Meletis has been a really good friend of mine. Tom Dutton, the TGIF guys, for many years now. Feel like they're part of my family.

Q. We've you talked a lot this year being our 75th anniversary year. This is the longest standing non-major event he have on the LPGA Tour. What can you say about this tournament and the importance it's had in our 75 years?

JULI INKSTER: Well, it's always been one of I think a lot of people's favorites because it's really family oriented and

caddie oriented. They do -- Stan the caddie master, does a heck of a job for all the caddies. Makes everybody feel welcome.

It's just a great area, the Northwest, to have a tournament. I know they've gone through some rough times trying to get sponsors, ups and downs, but I hope everybody just continues to support it because it is a legacy.

Q. And last one from me before I open it up here. Just as you've seen the Tour evolve, what are you expecting to see out there this week playing with some of the rising stars we have?

JULI INKSTER: They're really good. I mean, they're just amazing golfers. You know, the way they strike the ball, the way they course management their game, it's just a different animal than when we came out.

But hopefully I can teach them maybe to have a little more fun out there and enjoy the opportunity to play golf.

Q. I know you got the opportunity to hang out with some of the Epson Tour players a few weeks ago. What was that experience like to get to interact with that next generation of aspiring LPGA stars?

JULI INKSTER: It was great. It was really nice of them. They came up and asked a lot of questions. You know, I think it would really behoove the LPGA to do so more of those Senior Epsos. It's really the first mandatory meeting I've ever been in that no one was on their phones and they were all really engaged in what we had to say.

Try to get them to learn more about the LPGA and what we need from them coming up as they progress through their journey.

Q. I know Carly mentioned celebrating our 75th year. For you, speak to how important the LPGA organization has been to your life, career, and everything you wanted to live out on and off the golf course?

JULI INKSTER: Yeah, I've had a lot of people say, man, if



you were a male, just think how much you would have won. But for me, it wasn't about the money. It was I had the opportunity to travel around the world, bring my family, compete, and make a really nice living.

So I'm very thankful for our 13 Founders and what they've put in. And then the people before me. I learned a lot from the Carners, Whitworths Bradleys, the Sheehans, the Kings, all those, and hopefully I taught the generation behind me.

I know the diversity has changed a lot out here, but it's still the same thing. We're still trying to grow the game for women's golf. We need everybody on board for that.

Q. As somebody that helps carry the mantel forward, how proud are you of the organizations's growth and how it's evolved over its 75 year history?

JULI INKSTER: We've had a lot of great leaders leading us to this, but this is an organization where we're individual employees. If we want this to continue we have to work at that. That's doing your part in the pro-am, doing your part in the sponsor's dinners.

And the fans. We need to get more fans out here. Girls golf is growing rapidly and there are idols. They look up to us. Well, maybe not me, but the generation that are playing right now.

We got to make golf look fun. I think that's our next thing, is improve a little bit on being a little more emotional out there and just enjoying the game. Everybody would kill to be able to do what we do for a living, and to be able to go out there and play golf and compete against the best in the world on the LPGA is something not to take for granted.

Q. I know as a player you're obviously super competitive, super fiery, and love to show a lot of emotion out there. What's the level competitiveness coming into this week, using this to prep for the U.S. Senior Women's Open next week?

JULI INKSTER: Played Toledo and played okay there. Last couple weeks I've been working on my game. It's exhausting, but now I know why I retired.

The USGA Senior is really important me. I would really like to win that or be competitive in that, so I'm giving it my all this year to see what happens. So put myself out there, play this week, but I figured there is no better way to really prepare for a tournament than playing in a tournament.

So my expectations, I know I'll be hitting first most the time which is okay. Just try to put some solid rounds together

and maybe see if I can shoot under par.

Q. Good luck this week. Thanks.

JULI INKSTER: I'll need it.

Q. When was the last time you played in the Portland Classic? Also, one of your favorite memories from winning in 1999. I know was your fifth win that year, so big win.

JULI INKSTER: I remember I needed that to get in the Hall of Fame. That got me my 27th point, so that was huge. My family flew up. I had a nine year old and a four year old, so -- five year old. So Brian flew them up here to be able to celebrate with them.

I had a lot of my peers on the putting green and just the respect that they showed me that day really meant a lot to me.

I can't remember the last one. It's probably been seven or eight years since I played here, or more. You know, I always kind of try to help out Tom Maletis and them, and they've been -- I'm really grateful they give my Inkster Award a sponsor invite every year. I try to help them out as much as I can every year because I really appreciate it. It's a big thing for them to be able to come in and get a sponsor invite and keep continuing in their career.

Q. You just mentioned about the Inkster Award sponsor exemption. Can you go back and talk about how this tournament has been so supportive of that award, and with Carolina playing this week, how is her game going into this week. Also you have Jaravee in the field. Talk about that overall. How important is this tournament to you with your award?

JULI INKSTER: Yeah, it's great. I feel like I'm creating a little family with all my Inkster Awards. I'm going to play a practice round with Carolina this afternoon. I haven't been able to do that with my other Inkster Awards, so really looking forward to that.

When I had this idea of the Inkster Award I talked to Tom Maletis and the LPGA and they were all in on it. So this is, what, my sixth one, and it's great watching them each compete. They text me and questions and, I mean, that's kind of what I want to do it for. Just going from college golf to professional golf is sum of a big gap there. I just want to be there for them. The more comfortable they get the less calls I get.

When they're out there I try to go look them up and say hi. I think they're very grateful for Workday for what they've



done for the Inkster Award, and being able to financially give them a little help along the way.

And so it's been a great journey for me.

Q. Off the golf course with Jaravee, Carolina, is there any dinner plans, any mentorship dinners or anything like that you'll be doing this week?

JULI INKSTER: Well, I'm actually having dinner with Carolina and Mark Ganz and her parents tomorrow. I've been really talking a lot to Carolina and she seems super engaged in that.

Ingrid has already won this year.

Jenny Bae is playing great.

Jaravee is playing good.

Natalie is getting her doctorate degree, so they all seem to be doing well.

I'm just here for them and watching them live out their dreams.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me and we'll wrap up. Talk a little bit about you playing this week. What kind of example does that show as well for the younger generation? You know you're keeping your competitive nature alive and continue to go play?

JULI INKSTER: Well, I think I have such a passion for the game. I love the game. I love playing the game for fun. I'm weird. I like to practice. I call it my church.

But this game has given me so much on and off the golf course that I just hope people really can look back and learn that they have the greatest opportunity to make a living and to do something they really enjoy. You should never take it for granted. Should always respect the game and respect for peers.

THE MODERATOR: Great. Thank you so much for this time, Juli.

JULI INKSTER: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports