

# Portland Classic

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia Edgewater Country Club

## Nancy Lopez

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Hello and welcome to the media center at the 2025 Standard Portland Classic. I am joined by LPGA Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez, a guest of The Standard this week.

First things first, talk about the experience of hearing you would have the opportunity to be at this event and what your reaction was.

NANCY LOPEZ: When they invited me to come I was thrilled. I was like quickly looking at my calendar, can I go, can I go. This is one of my favorite places. There are three places that I loved playing on the LPGA Tour the most because I always wanted to sign up as soon as I knew the dates: here, Toledo, and Rochester. Those are my three favorites, and I always wanted to play in those tournaments.

Because there are golf courses that you really love to play, and Columbia Edgewater is one the my favorites. I did win the U.S. Junior here when I was 17 and have so many great memories of those years. Then when played on the LPGA Tour I don't know if I ever missed one but I wouldn't have one on purpose for sure.

And then The Standard coming in and becoming a title sponsor, thank them so much. Almost get a little emotional. When you love a place that you played all your career, you kind of want the next generation of players to feel the same way that you did about the event.

So to come back -- because I was here a few years ago and didn't get invited but I know there were a lot of things going on. Just nice to be invited back. I was thrilled and really wanted to accept it.

Today I got to play in the pro-am. I was so excited to play on this golf course again because it's in great shape. The greens are beautiful. I had great company when I was out there so really a fun day for me. The weather was beautiful. It wasn't 99, which is good, but it was just a perfect day of golf.

**Q. And you touched on it a little bit, but this is our 75th anniversary year and we talked a lot about celebrating that. What do you think this event in particular means to the history of the LPGA?**

NANCY LOPEZ: Gosh, how long has this tournament been?

**Q. It's the 53rd year.**

NANCY LOPEZ: 53rd. That's a long time to have a tournament that keeps going. I'm proud, and hope that I contributed in my career to help this Tour grow, because that was always my goal, to help the Tour get bigger and better and see all the purses growing and see all the great players.

Today playing with the two players I played with it was really fun. My ego was a little beat down because I remember when I used to hit it where they hit it, but it was just so much fun. So many great memories. And to be able to say I played on the Tour almost 24 years, I'm proud of that. I love the Tour. I feel like it's still my Tour. I always promote the LPGA.

It's fun to see the ladies on television every weekend. When I was growing up my dad would run in there and tell me come and see -- because the ladies were only on like maybe once every few months. I don't even think they were on once a month. JoAnne Carner was my idol, and my dad would say, come and see. JoAnne is playing. So I would go in there and watch it.

Just nice to see the players, every weekend getting to watch them play and how talented they are. And they just keep helping the Tour grow. As we always used to say and probably still feel that way, we want to leave it better than we found it. I think that's just so important.

**Q. And you played today with Kiara Romero in the pro-am. She just won the more McCormack Award this morning, No. 1 amateur.**

NANCY LOPEZ: Great.



**Q. I don't know if she talked about it at all, what can you say about her talent and the rising talent that maybe you've seen in watching over television?**

NANCY LOPEZ: It's amazing to watch the great play. I think a lot of people relate with the lady professionals because they hit it a long way. And they're not very big most of them and they can still hit it good.

People that want to learn how to play golf can really watch and try and emulate them. They hit it a long way and don't swing as hard as the guys do and yet play a beautiful game of golf. The finesse, I think it's even better than it used to be. They work on a lot of things that are important.

Just the talent, it's just fun to watch. I love it.

**Q. Touching on your wins here at the Portland Classic that you had, what do you remember? Do you have any memories specifically about your wins?**

NANCY LOPEZ: You know, I don't have -- I can't remember the wins but I remember how excited I was to play this golf course. Some golf courses suit your eye better than others and I just always felt comfortable here.

I always loved the visualization of hitting the shot. I think what this golf course does provide you, too, as a player, is there is a reward/risk factor here on a lot of holes. It was fun to go for it. And then it was fun -- not so fun. I didn't like to back off very often. I was always very aggressive.

It's a tight golf course where you can choose your poison. It's not right out there, you know, you hit your driver all the time and next shot. You have to really think your way around the course, and I like the little right-to-left holes, left-to-right, greens, like I said, they're beautiful.

To putt on greens like this every day, it's just -- it was so much fun today because I could feel it was so pure. I just love that part of golf. And so the memories of winning here are all good memories. Like I said, I just love the golf course. Always felt comfortable. When you're comfortable on a golf course, you always play it well.

And that's the positive feelings you have as you go to an event, you know and feel like you're going to play well, so it's fun to get back here.

**Q. We spoke to Juli Inkster yesterday who's playing in the field this week. We showed her some footage of her win here. You were in the footage spraying champagne on her. What was your reaction to hearing she would be playing this week?**

NANCY LOPEZ: I didn't know she was -- I knew she was going to be here but I didn't know she's playing. I'm glad to see Juli playing. It's awesome. She still works on her game and still works a lot physically trying to stay in good shape, and it would be kind of fun if she won. You know, after you see Rose when he won last week and see the older generation still playing, I would love to see her win. I would be rooting for her coming down the stretch.

**Q. That win when she won was to clinch the Hall of Fame as well. Do you remember that at all?**

NANCY LOPEZ: You know, I can't remember, but Juli has always been a great friend of mine. To watch her play and to play with her, we've always -- I've always joked with her, but it's really true that I outhit her when I was on the LPGA Tour and it kind of aggravates her when I say that. We were playing at a tournament, I think it was Atlantic City, and the -- you hit your drive and it's over a hill so you don't really see the ball land.

She hit hers and I thought it was center of the fairway. Didn't see it land. I thought it was a little right of center. I outhit her about 15 yards. We get over the hill and I am walking to my ball because I know that I outhit her and mine was a little right. As I almost got to my ball she yelled, Titleist 2. I went, oops, that's my ball.

So I start walking back to go -- embarrassingly walking back thinking I know that just can't be my ball. So I'm almost to her and she says, psych, and I wanted to punch her. She said, you didn't even give me a courtesy look. I'm like, I knew it wasn't my ball. (Laughter.)

So we've always kind of joked around like that. I've always enjoyed playing with her. She is just a hoot and a really good ambassador for the LPGA Tour.

**Q. That's awesome. I think we'll have to ask her about that, too.**

NANCY LOPEZ: She won't remember it because I outdove her. She's going to say she outdove me.

**Q. We have 21 different winners through 20 events this season. It's pretty remarkable. We've never had it like this. What does that say about the depth of the Tour right now and how many great players there are?**

NANCY LOPEZ: I mean, when you have 121 different winners they're out there dogfighting and all trying to win. There is so much talent. Just the two players I played with today, how far they hit the ball, how accurate they are, it was amazing.

So I'm not surprised. You're going to have different winners all the time because they're all at that high standard and have great golf games. Of course it's the one that gets it in the hole the fastest. Yeah, it's pretty amazing. I didn't know that.

**Q. How proud are you to see how much the LPGA has evolved and how much you contributed to that growth over your whole career?**

NANCY LOPEZ: You know, I mean, I was 20 when I won my nine tournaments my rookie year, and during that time it was exciting. You know, you're 20 years old. I didn't have any money and now I'm making money and people want to watch me play golf. It was so much fun.

And just there were days that, yeah, I might not have wanted to go to the press room when I didn't play well but I knew it was my duty as a professional to do what I needed to do.

It wasn't for Nancy Lopez it was for my Tour. Players need to remember that. Whatever we do reflects or how much better our Tour is going to be. You're supposed to give. You're supposed to -- it's your office. You come here, you want to make it better.

So do what you need to do; go to the press conferences. Back in those days I won nine tournaments my rookie year. Well, the next year I had to go to nine press conferences before the tournament. I mean, I went to support the tournaments, so I traveled nine different places to just get people ready and excited about the tournament.

So it was really different, but I'm glad I could do it. I was happy that I won nine tournaments, and just my way of giving back. But I loved it and have always been comfortable with people and I talk a lot, so I'm comfortable with that.

It was just nice to be a part of helping the LPGA grow any way that you could, and I hope that players always do that. The people that bring us to the tournaments, sponsors that put all this together and all the other people, not just the title sponsors, volunteers and everybody, they don't have to do that. They don't have to come here and spend their money to help us have a great event.

We need to always do what's right and work hard so that we can have great tournaments and people want us to come back. That's so important.

**Q. My name is Maeve from First Tee Oregon. When did you first start playing golf and what made you love it?**

NANCY LOPEZ: I started playing golf -- I was almost eight years old and I played -- my mom and dad took me to the golf course with them. My mom wasn't a very good golfer but did it to have some exercise. My dad was a pretty good amateur player and he loved it.

I loved golf because my dad was a perfect golf dad. He loved golf and he wanted me to love golf because he believed that if I loved golf I would be great at it.

So I started playing and he put me in my first Pee Wee tournament when I was eight. I lived in New Mexico and I played in this tournament in Almogordo, New Mexico. It was nine holes, three days. It was a Pee Wee tournament. Pee Wees only played nine holes.

After 27 holes I won the tournament and won this little bitty trophy and it was awesome because I had never had a trophy. I won it, but I won the tournament by 110 shots, so I was really a little bit better than the other little Pee Wees.

But it was like I got a great taste of winning and it was really fun, but I loved the trophy. That meant more. I still have it. Just little. But it was just fun to have a trophy and win it.

**Q. If you could tell your younger self one thing you wish you would have known back then to become a better golfer, what would it be?**

NANCY LOPEZ: You know, my dad always taught me to enjoy golf, and I have a company now. My mantra is play happy because my dad always said I played better when I played happy. Once in a while he would see me get angry, and if I did get angry I didn't play as well.

I remember him asking me one day, do you want to shoot 39 or do you want to shoot 40? Well, dad, I want to shoot 39. Well, when you get mad you shoot 40. When he said that to me it was like, ping. Something went off. Yeah, he's so right. Why do I want to get mad if I'm not going to play as well.

From that day -- I thought my dad made a lot of sense. I was a great golf dad. Never put a lot of pressure on me. Wanted me to love playing golf. If I didn't play well he would always hug me. Never tortured me asking me why I didn't play well or what was I thinking. Always hugged me and said let's go work a little harder. I.

Think that's why I was able to accomplish what I did. I had a dad that really understood the emotions of golf and he knew I wasn't trying to play bad. Always trying to play good.



So he was always such a great supporter and just helped me to love the game.

**Q. What is your favorite book?**

NANCY LOPEZ: Favorite book? Oh, boy. The Giving Tree. I used to read that to my kids. That was one of my favorite books.

**Q. And finally, what is your favorite pizza topping?**

NANCY LOPEZ: My favorite pizza topping would be pepperoni, hamburger, and extra cheese. (Laughter.)

**Q. Talking about playing happy reminded me of it. I believe you recently starred in Happy Gilmore 2. Can you talk about that experience?**

NANCY LOPEZ: Well, you know, I don't know why they called me out of the blue. Nancy, we're going to do Happy Gilmore 20. They said it had been 29 years since the first Happy Gilmore. I didn't realize that. I said, sure.

Then it was hard to get the dates because Nelly and I were in the same scene so wanted us to both be there. It was hard finding a date. We finally did. We flew to New Jersey. Of course I was thrilled. I thought this is so great.

But I was so nervous. I only had one line and I was like so nervous. But it was so much fun. And Adam Sandler was the director and was helping us that day. We were in New Jersey, an old school, so bars on the windows and looked like a prison.

The toughest thing besides being nervous delivering my one line was acting serious when Shooter did his part of freaking out after Nelly asked if -- what if he saw Adam with a gold jacket. When he did that freak-out, we did it probably 25 to 30 times and every time he did it it got funnier and funnier.

I didn't know if the camera was on me and you're trying not to laugh because you're supposed to be serious. I was like really struggling with that because he got better and better it was hysterical to watch it.

Being a part of that was really fun. Meeting Adam Sandler, he was just so nice. I always say I was an Adam Sandler fan, I think. When I watched his movies I enjoyed his humor, but I didn't really know if I would like him if I met him. Such a nice man. Humble. Loves his family. It was just really a great experience.

Then the premier was really cool. We went to New York.

The premier was on the 21th; of course it was shown on the 25th. Just being with everybody that -- mostly everybody was there that was in the movie. It was really like Hollywood.

When we walked on the -- it was a green carpet not a red carpet. Of course we've got all the photographers, must have been 50 photographers taking pictures and yelling, your name, Nancy.

I'm like, I didn't know what to do. I thought I was supposed to be like a glamour girl, whatever. It was so much fun and a great experience.

My husband was more emotional because he's like, people are going to watch you. Even after you're gone they're going to see you in this movie. I never thought about it that way, but I thought that's pretty cool.

It is really fun. And, you know, watching it, because of course you don't see it until the premier and watching what they did and how they used all the guys and Nelly and I were in there, it was a great experience.

**Q. What did you maybe learn about acting and also going through that with Nelly? Was there any side conversations about acting or anything like that?**

NANCY LOPEZ: I'm a golfer, not an actor or actress. It's funny, because now when you Google me -- somebody sent it me. When they Googled me it says actress. And golfer. So that was kind of fun to see that. I never thought about myself being an actress. Once you're in a movie you're an actress.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. Appreciate the time.

NANCY LOPEZ: Thank you, you're welcome.

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