

# Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

Bradenton, Florida, USA

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

## Jose Maria Olazabal

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined at the 2026 Senior PGA Championship by Jose Maria Olazabal. What are your thoughts on the course so far and your preparations for the week?

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I have to say the golf course is in very good condition. I think it's a very demanding course. Kind of longish, even though we're using the forward tees in some of the holes, but I would emphasize maybe on how difficult and treacherous the greens are.

All the greens are elevated. You have a lot of runoffs, and actually, you know, it demands a lot of distance control and accuracy with your irons on the greens. Otherwise, you're going to end up in bad spots, and it's going to be very difficult to save par from those places.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You're no stranger to the Senior PGA Championship. What do you enjoy coming back to this event for?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I mean, it's a major event. The PGA -- it's a special event. It's unique. You do have not just the regular players on tour. You know, you have players that qualify for this event. It means a lot. They do a wonderful job promoting the golf, and it's their tournament. It's our tournament.

It's unique in that regard. I always look forward to play this event for the history, for what it means. Yeah, it has a special spot.

**Q. I was wondering if coming from Augusta and being there for the two days competing and then practicing for two days you think that helps you for this week here?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: I'm not so sure about that. Conditions are different this week. The grass is different, to start with. We have Bermuda grass around here.

Chipping around the greens is completely different to last week because of the grass, because of the runoffs that you have around here.

On top of that, I imagine it's going to be windy. Usually it's windy around here. I think conditions are different. But obviously, you know, Augusta is a great golf course, but you need a different touch around the greens this week compared to last week. I have to somehow adapt myself to the new conditions this week.

**Q. So we had a few past champions here, Alex Cejka was here. Harrington was here. Alex was talking about the problems with his neck. Harrington was talking about his back and his knee. They both say you don't complain too much here because everybody has something. So with your experience with injuries early in your career, I mean, how do you deal with all these aches?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: You have to accept. You have to somehow be mentally prepared for it. Obviously we get older. I'm 60 years old. You cannot expect to be pain-free, especially with all the abuse we put in our joints and muscles and all that through the years.

Everybody, you know, has a pain here or there, and you have to live with it. There is no need to talk about it or waste any time talking about it. You just try to cope with it and try to do the best you can.

**Q. Here too we can talk about the challenge of distance, and that connects with being 60 or being 50 and the new guys coming that still hit the ball, like, 300 yards. How much do you feel that?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Yeah, I feel it. I know I am one of the shortest hitters on this tour. When you look at all the newcomers, you know, how long they can still hit it, you know, I mean, you notice that obviously. You realize that, but at the end of the day have you to play your game, try to do the best you can, and see where that takes you. As simple as that.

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Golf in that regard has many ways to shoot a good round. There are many, many fitting ways. Sometimes have you players that hit it long, and some others will have to rely on different tools.

**Q. Talking about the tools, what parts of your game do you think are going to benefit you here this week?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I think my short game, at the end of the day. I think, as I said, the golf course is kind of long to me. I'm going to have to rely on my short game if I want to score well around here.

**Q. Talk about how much last week helped you prepare for this week.**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I mean, in a way, yes, but I think conditions are completely different here. We do have different grass. We have Bermuda grass here this week, and you have severe runoffs around this golf course around the greens. That demands a different type of shot around the greens.

In that regard, I don't think playing Augusta helps me playing this week. I think I do have to adapt to the new scenario, to the new conditions, to the different grass, to the different type of shots you have to hit around the greens, because sometimes you really kind of use these slopes around the greens.

At Augusta you try to bounce the ball in some cases just short of the green, use the slope to control the speed, but here that's not going to be the case. So I might have to use different shots around the greens. As I said, I need to adapt to that situation.

**Q. Do you enjoy playing a course where your creativity and imagination can come out?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I think in general that's one of my strengths. I've never been a long hitter. It's true that at my prime my iron play was very sharp, but I think chipping and putting was the key for me.

Whenever you have, you know, tricky greens or difficult areas to chip from, I think I'm pretty strong in that department. That might help me, but as I said earlier, the golf course is kind of long for me.

I cannot cut the corners. You do have a few holes where you have water, and if you hit it long enough, you can cut the corner and have a shorter club onto the green. So that's not going to be my case. I'm going to be hitting longer irons onto these greens. That's not going to help

me, but I will have to adapt to the situation.

**Q. If you had to bet a quarter, who would you pick to be the winner this week?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: This week? Someone that plays solid from tee to green. This golf course demands, you know, great ball striking, great trajectory control, and distance control. If you do that well, you're going to be up there.

**Q. You are obviously one of the greatest European players of all time. Do you think Rory has surpassed everybody in that regard?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: Well, I think Rory has still a long ways to go. I don't think he's going to finish here.

**Q. But is he No. 1 now in your mind?**

JOSE MARIA OLAZABAL: I think you do have a group of players there that, you know, during the season you will see moments where certain players will be like ahead of the rest, but that will change. I don't see, you know, one single player dominating the game like some other players have done in the past.

I say this because the difference between the players of that caliber is so small these days that, you know, at any given moment any little bounce here or there might change the outcome.

Look at Scottie. He was 12 shots behind after two days, and he was in contention. He had a great chance of winning that tournament. If he makes that putt on 17, which looked in the hole for pretty much all the way, things would have been different.

You know, I think you do have three, four, five players that really maybe are just ahead of the rest. It's up to the timing, the season who is hot at that moment. As I said, I believe that it's very difficult to dominate the game these days with players of that level and having such little difference between them.

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