

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

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Hazeltine National Golf Club

Kim Paez

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: PGA of America golf professional Kim Paez is with us now at the 2026 KPMG Women's PGA Championship. Kim, welcome to Hazeltine in your second appearance in this championship.

KIM PAEZ: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: What does this opportunity to compete as a member of the Corebridge Financial Team mean for you this week?

KIM PAEZ: I mean, I'm very honored to be here, and for this to be my second chance to compete with the world's best, I couldn't ask for anything more.

It's something I dreamed about when I was a little girl. I actually never thought I would have the chance to do this. To be a part of Corebridge Financial Team, they've been so supportive until now.

The communication leading up until this week, just the simple words of encouragement now and then, it's definitely meant a lot and it's helped my preparation process up until this week.

So I'm looking forward to the challenge and see how I do on this test.

THE MODERATOR: That's great. Thank you. Questions.

Q. Curious, Kim, why didn't you think it would happen? Were dreams just maybe not as open to young women back then or...

KIM PAEZ: I would say it's just -- I gave Q-School a try two years in a row. Just couldn't make it past second stage. You know, I thought maybe it's time to give that dream a rest and work somewhere else in the golf industry.

That's how I got this job at Ping, which I love, and on the



side I decided to become a PGA member. I missed competing. That was the biggest thing.

Being a PGA member allowed me to scratch that itch of competition, and I honestly did not know that that would give me the opportunity to stamp my ticket into an LPGA major.

Q. Curious, you still teach young girls. Do you see yourself maybe a dual role model, that you -- okay, maybe the girls can't dream of playing, but there are opportunities in golf. You made a career out of it and you're still a competitor.

KIM PAEZ: Absolutely. I tell the girls, not even the girls that I'll teach but the girls that I work with for my Ping job as a Tour rep, I'll ask them their dreams and aspirations and if they're not sure if they want to turn pro, I always let them know nowadays the opportunities are endless.

No matter what their passion is, whether it's social media or it's designing golf bags, golf clubs, working with equipment, you know, you can find a position in the golf industry while still competing. I'm living proof of that and I'm very proud of the career that I've built myself.

To be able to share that with girls and give them some kind of encouragement in case the Tour life isn't what they want and still love to compete and have the chance to be out here at an LPGA major, that's something I definitely encourage to my young juniors.

Q. Kim, I think you are one of the few women PGA professionals that is not afraid of competing against the men, no?

KIM PAEZ: (Laughter.)

Q. Can you talk about that experience and why you do it and how it helps your game?

KIM PAEZ: Yes. I guess my love for competing is just the competition, to compete and see where my game matches up to the golf course and the challenges that golf course gives.



Whether it's playing with the guys or the girls, I guess it doesn't really matter to me. Maybe it's because when I play against the guys I already have an expectation that I don't really -- I'm not on their level I guess, just because of how hard or how much harder they can hit it.

So I'll just play my best and do my best, and if a win comes out of that, then that's the cherry on top. (Smiling.)

Q. Talking about your experience with player development and what you do with your work.

KIM PAEZ: Yes.

Q. Also as an instructor. Is there inspirational cases of players that you developed or worked with that have touched you especially?

KIM PAEZ: Plenty. Plenty of girls. Whether it's girls that I work with as far as their equipment or if it's girls that I'm teaching, if I have any part of their success and their journey or their golf career, that's pretty much what it's all about for me.

Golf has given me so many opportunities. I mean, look where I am now. It's my way of paying it forward and giving back to the game. You know, I even tell my husband when I'm out at these college events or these elite junior events and I either have one of my students or one of my Ping girls playing and they're playing with the equipment that I helped them get into, it just makes me smile to know that I had part in that, in their success.

Just means a lot to me.

Q. Do you have any specific stories of anyone?

KIM PAEZ: Well, yeah, I guess Aphrodite Deng. I'm sure we're all very familiar with her. But we been working really hard with her and her equipment. I remember when I first got into this position at Ping. It was in 2023, and I first invited her over to Ping headquarters and we got her locked in in Ping equipment.

And then just to see her now and her success -- I think she just finished top 20 at the U.S. Open -- but just to see her bloom into the golfer she is now, I take pride in that.

Q. Yeah. One last thing. From your perspective or as a player developer, how have you seen especially in the last five years the evolution of women's golf, and what do you tell your girls? How do you prepare them for this?

KIM PAEZ: Yeah. You know, I am really proud to see the direction of women's golf. I think it's grown immensely since I was a junior. There are so many more opportunities, even as they're looking at their future past college, you know, with all these mini tours that are available to them now.

I think when I graduated from college it was just either the Futures Tour at the time or the LPGA and then you had a mini tour like the Cactus Tour in Arizona. Now there is the WAPT, Epson Tour, LET is another route for these girls.

Or if they decide pro golf life is not their thing, as I mentioned, there are so many careers in the golf industry. You don't have to just work at a pro shop. You can follow your dreams as, I don't know, a merchandiser at a country club or you can run a golf course.

There is just so many opportunities for these girls if golf is their passion. You know, they don't have to feel discouraged if they're not going to turn pro. They can still find and build a successful career in the golf industry.

Q. Congrats on qualifying for your second KPMG Women's PGA Championship. A couple years ago you played at Sahalee. I am curious, from then now what's the status of your game from a competitive standpoint and what did that experience help you learn coming into your second major?

KIM PAEZ: Yeah, that first experience I think it was just getting my feet wet and playing on the big stage. I think I went into that championship looking to have fun, absorb everything that I can from that week.

But now this is my second championship. I've definitely focused in my preparation for this week. I've definitely focused on getting my mindset where it should be. Working on some physical parts of my game such as short game and putting, because this time I do have goals of course. Of course I would love to make the cut. But working on my mindset.

I know now this week, in order to reach my goals, all I need to do is just focus on my process and trusting my preparation and having confidence in the decisions I make this week. That's what's going to help me achieve my goals.

But it's all about focusing on shot by shot and just accepting the challenges of the championship conditions and doing my best and then we'll see what happens with my goals by Friday.

Q. In regards to your teaching specifically, in the



Frisco area, home of the PGA of America, what are you most excited to show to your students who are learning from you currently about your desire to compete at such a high level as well, too?

KIM PAEZ: Yeah, you know, I just want to make them proud and show them that with persistence, hard work, you can achieve your dreams; you can reach your goals. Sometimes it may not happen on your timing, but if you just keep working hard, you can get there.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Kim. Have a great time.

KIM PAEZ: Thank you for having me. Thank you everybody.

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