



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Five players tied for lead at Kā'anapali after round one of Dr. Donnis

Mercer, Oregon State and Washington lead field

MAUI, Hawai'i – The Mercer Bears (-6) feasted on calm winds and receptive greens to grab a one-shot lead over Oregon State (-5) in the opening round of the 2025 Dr. Donnis Thompson Invitational at Kā'anapali. Washington (-3), Sacramento State (-2), Denver (-2) and Gonzaga (E) round out the top six.



Mercer's Emilia Väistö is dialed into her approach shot on hole 7 on Royal Kā'anapali. (Photo by Kā'anapali Golf Courses)

“Putts were consistently dropping for us today,” described Kim Smaha, assistant coach of the Mercer women’s golf team. “We will remind our team to stay confident and believe in themselves. They have put in the hard work to get here. Now is the time to stay focused and see it through.”

Mercer has three players in the top 16 of the 98-player field. The Bears were led by Emilia Väistö (T1; -4). The freshman from Finland felt right at home in the tropics of Kā’anapali, Hawai‘i.

The Oregon State Beavers, who qualified for the 2024 NCAA DI Women’s Golf Championship and won last month’s Causeway Invitational (Sacramento, California), sit one shot back.

The Washington Huskies trail closely. They are led by legendary head coach Mary Lou Mulflur, who has guided the program for 42 seasons and will retire at the conclusion of this season.

In the individual field, a five-way tie for first at four-under features Väistö, Vani Karimanal (UC Davis), Madde Sund (Oregon State), Wendy Song (Hawai‘i) and María José “MJ” Barragán (BYU).



UC Davis’ Vani Karimanal tees off on hole 15, a 126-yard par 3 on Royal Kā’anapali. (Photo by Kā’anapali Golf Courses)

Sund is another Scandinavian visiting Maui. The Swedish senior seeks her first collegiate win after recording her second hole-in-one this season during Sunday’s practice round on hole two of Royal Kā’anapali. Sund was named a 2024-25 All-American Scholar by the Women’s Golf Coaches Association (WGCA).



Oregon State's Madde Sund hits her third shot on hole 9, a 428-yard par 5 on Royal Kā'anapali. (Photo by Kā'anapali Golf Courses)

Song, a junior from Taiwan playing as an individual, represented the host school (Hawai'i) well.

"Our team was thrilled for Wendy. She carded a bogey-free 68 en route to her best finish as a Rainbow Wahine," commented three-time Big West Coach of the Year and Hawai'i head women's golf coach, Julie Brooks. "We hope she can ride this wave of success into a strong finish."



Hawai'i's Wendy Song eyes her hole 6 greenside chip on Royal Kā'anapali. (Photo by Kā'anapali Golf Courses)

Barragán, the talented BYU freshman and 2025 Women's Mexico Amateur runner-up, is eyeing her first collegiate win after finishing second in last fall's Red Raider Invitational (Lubbock, TX).



BYU's María José "MJ" Barragán watches her putt on hole 5, a 339-yard par 4 on Royal Kā'anapali. (Photo by Kā'anapali Golf Courses)

Raya Nakao (T10; -2), an Oregon State sophomore and O'ahu native who graduated from the same high school (Punahou) as President Obama, won the 2022 HHSAA State Championship at Kā'anapali. She capitalized on her institutional knowledge in round one to finish two strokes back.



Oregon State's Raya Nakao carefully watches her drive on Royal Kā'anapali. (Photo by Kā'anapali Golf Courses)

The second round begins at 8:00 a.m. HST. Attendance is free for walking spectators.

Following Tuesday's round at 3:00 p.m. on the driving range, Hawai'i women's golf coach, Julie Brooks, her team and Kā'anapali teaching professional, Jon Tempest, will host a free clinic for keiki (kids). They will all offer swing lessons, interactive drills, tips on college recruiting and more.

Team and individual scores can be found below and here: [SCOREBOARD](#)

Team Leaderboard

Place	School	To Par	Rd. 1
1	Mercer	-6	282
2	Oregon State	-5	283
3	Washington	-3	285
T4	Sacramento State	-2	286
T4	Denver	-2	286
6	Gonzaga	E	288
T7	UC Riverside	+3	291
T7	Cal Poly	+3	291
7	BYU	+3	291
10	UC Davis	+4	292
11	Sam Houston	+6	294
T12	Montana State	+7	295
T12	Seattle	+7	295
14	Arkansas State	+8	296
15	Fresno State	+9	297
16	San Diego State	+11	299
17	Hawai'i	+14	302

Top Individuals

Place	Player	School	To Par	Rd. 1
T1	Vani Karimanal	UC Davis	-4	68
T1	Madde Sund	Oregon State	-4	68
T1	Emilia Väistö	Mercer	-4	68
T1	*Wendy Song	Hawai'i	-4	68

T1	Maria Jose Barragan	BYU	-4	68
T6	Sneha Sharan	Sacramento State	-3	69
T6	Grace Lee	Gonzaga	-3	69
T6	Abigail Leighton	UC Davis	-3	69
T6	Mikayla Dubnik	Mercer	-3	69
T10	Caitlin Maurice	Sacramento State	-2	70
T10	Emma Bryant	Denver	-2	70
T10	Athena Ni	Washington	-2	70
T10	Raya Nakao	Oregon State	-2	70
T10	Vivian Lu	Washington	-2	70
T10	Grace Jin	Sam Houston	-2	70

*Competing as Individual

TOURNAMENT FACTS

Dates: March 24–26, 2025

Venue: Royal Kā'anapali

Location: Lahaina, Maui

Yardage (Par): 6,013 (72)

Format: 54 holes; 18 holes each day; 5-count-4

Tee Times: 8:00 a.m. HST shotgun start each day

Host: Hawai'i

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About Kā'anapali Golf Courses

Built on 300 acres of land once home to Hawaiian royalty (Royal Chiefs of Maui), Kā'anapali Golf Courses offers pristine conditions and panoramic views of Lana'i, Molokai, the Pacific Ocean and West Maui Mountains.

Opened in 1962 and designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr., the par-71, 6,700-yard Royal Kā'anapali Course features wide fairways and undulating greens which make it distinctive and demanding. The tournament-tested layout has welcomed Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Greg Norman, Fred Couples, Jan Stephenson, Betsy King and other legends.

High-profile events have included Shell's Wonderful World of Golf (1964), Canada Cup (1964), LPGA's Kemper Open (1982-85), PGA TOUR Champions' Kā'anapali Classic (1987-2000) and SKINS Game (2008-11), and Hawaii High School Athletic Association Golf State Championships (1998, 2009, '13, '17, '22).

Complementing Royal Kā'anapali is the modernized Kai Course, which hosted Golf Channel's "Big Break Kā'anapali" in 2008. The 6,400-yard, par-70 layout boasts an array of strategically placed bunkers, contoured fairways and resurfaced greens.

More information: www.kaanapaligolfcourses.com and 808-661-3691.

About Troon

Kā'anapali Golf Courses are managed by Indigo Sports, a Troon company. Headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz., Troon is the world's largest golf and golf-related hospitality management company providing services at 940-plus locations in 45-plus states and 40-plus countries, including operational responsibility for 575-plus 18-hole equivalent golf courses. In addition to

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