

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**TONY FINAU**  
**NELLY KORDA**

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**THE MODERATOR:** We welcome our first guests into the interview room here at the Grant Thornton Invitational. We have eight-time LPGA winner Nelly Korda and six-time PGA TOUR winner Tony Finau who are playing together as a team this week in the championship. You've both had a chance to look at the golf course. I know you've both played here before at this venue in a different event.

Nelly, we'll start with you. Just give us your thoughts on the golf course.

**NELLY KORDA:** Well, I played two weeks ago. It's definitely a little firmer and faster than it was two weeks ago. I know on Wednesday they got like four inches of rain. So the greens are faster.

Yeah, I think it'll be a good test. It's still a little softer in the fairways, but the greens have definitely sped up.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I agree with that. I feel like I got a few mud balls out there, so I do think the fairways are a little soft. I think they will firm out

But it's a good test. I think the golf course is a good one, especially for this format. There's some holes you can score on. There's also holes you can get in trouble on. I think it's a good combination for the style of golf that we're playing this week. I think it's a great golf course for this format.

**THE MODERATOR:** How much have you guys played together and seen each other's games? What sort of experiences do you have --

**NELLY KORDA:** Nine holes yesterday. That's about it.

**TONY FINAU:** Exactly.

**NELLY KORDA:** I mean, I've watched Tony on TV for many, many years, but as in playing together, just the front nine yesterday.

**THE MODERATOR:** What do you like specifically about Tony's game? What do you think he'll bring to the team?

**NELLY KORDA:** One, I love the way how athletic his entire game is. He sees a shot, visualizes it, and then hits it, and I love that style of play. There's not much overanalyzing, which I feel like that's how I play, as well.

I can't wait to see all the bombs out there, as well. Hit it close for me.



**TONY FINAU:** That's right. Big admirer of Nelly and her game. I've also watched her over the years, more on TV than I've been able to play with her.

But after the nine holes yesterday, everything that I thought about her game, it was even better up close. A lot of fun to just tee it up with her yesterday, and I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of great shots and hopefully a lot of birdies and eagles this week.

**NELLY KORDA:** You're already making me blush.

**Q. Just talk about this format, what it does for golf, how unique it is and how enjoyable it will be for the 32 participants out there.**

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I think it's huge for our game to be able to join the men and women's tours together and to have some of the best players on both tours competing this week I think is a very cool thing, very unique thing for our game.

Yesterday I mentioned in an interview, I think some of the younger generation that is watching this event, I think this event is going to continue to grow. I think there's going to be a lot of great interest in this event moving forward, but to be involved in the inaugural Grant Thornton Invitational I think is really cool, and then to have Nelly as a partner to me is going to be a great bonus.

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, and I think it's going to be for us really exciting to see how this event does grow every year as it does bring something new and exciting to the game.

**Q. For both of you, I know obviously admirers of each other's games, but how do you complement each other from what you've seen so far?**

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, anybody would complement Nelly's game. She's good at everything. Sometimes my game can be a little rough around the edges, so she'll clean up for that.

Nelly is not a hard partner to play with, and then she's got an incredible attitude, and she's obviously extremely competitive, as well.

**NELLY KORDA:** I'm just getting compliments left and right. I love this.

**TONY FINAU:** I'm just being honest. She's been the best player in the women's game for the past few years, and being able to see it closely for nine holes, I can see why. I think our games complement each other very well. I hit it far --

**NELLY KORDA:** -- and straight and very good. The nine holes I did get to play with Tony, as well, just incredible how well he hits it. Just the different type of compression hit for sure, the sound, and then just I think overall the whole dynamic of the game. I think we're going to complement each other really well.

I think for us even the personalities is just going to flow.



**Q. With three different formats and obviously both having team play experience in the past, how much strategy do you put into things? Are you all playing your own games and hoping things work out?**

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I think there is a little bit of strategy involved this week because of the format. I've never played a modified best ball --

**NELLY KORDA:** Modified four-ball.

**TONY FINAU:** We've never done that, and you're going to have to play the same golf ball from the tee to the finish, finishing that hole. There's going to have to be a little bit of strategy there involved. She plays a different golf ball than I do. It spins more than the one that I'm playing.

Those are some of the things that we kind of tried to figure out yesterday

Then obviously in alternate shot, we've both played in big international cups for the U.S. so we've done that before, but you're also going to have to figure out what holes I'm going to be hitting on compared to the ones she's going to be hitting on. There's definitely going to be strategy involved for all the teams

We talked a little bit about that yesterday, and hopefully it works out for us.

**Q. Do you think adjusting to the different golf ball will be the most challenging part about the modified four-ball, or will there be other parts of strategy that might be more challenging?**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, I think for him it's going to be mainly driver it spins a little bit more, and for him it would be his ball spins less, so for me it would be long irons. If I'm going to be coming in with a low-spinning ball with a 5-iron, I know he's going to be chipping long. It's like, do you want to chip short or do you want to chip long.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, so there will definitely be some adjusting. We're both just going to have to adapt, but everybody else is, as well. We're not going to be the only ones with this type of challenge. Everybody is going to have to deal with something like that.

You may find a group that maybe plays a very similar ball so they're not going to be as challenged, but everybody across the board is going to be challenged with the same thing.

**Q. You're both coming to the end of the year but still playing during this off-season. Talk about how you've prepared for this event and going forward into next year, what your plans are into the new year?**

**NELLY KORDA:** I just kind of took it easy Thanksgiving week and then I started practicing last week. You played in an event last week. I'm playing also with my dad next week at the PNC, so not that many weeks off before the start of the year before the LPGA schedule comes along.



Yeah, as in my prep before this week, I did take Thanksgiving week off from golf. Just needed to decompress before the season and just started off practice last week.

**TONY FINAU:** I played last week at the Hero. That was my first start since August, so I took quite a few months off and just hung out with the family. I did a lot of training, so my body is in good shape, just to get ready for the new PGA TOUR season in January.

This was a tournament that I knew I was going to play and that I've been looking forward to, but I would say my preparation was more so getting a rep in last week to kind of prepare for this week, and luckily I played pretty nicely, not too much rust, and have a good idea of where the game is at just having played four competitive rounds last week.

**Q. Can you tell me how this partnership came about, and what was your reaction when you found out you would be playing together?**

**TONY FINAU:** We both signed with Grant Thornton earlier this year, so I think we're both very proud ambassadors of Grant Thornton, and it just made sense as we signed at the same time and representing Grant Thornton that this is the Grant Thornton Invitational and we both were just aligned and I think more than happy to tee it up with each other this week. I think it was just kind of an organic thing. It happened naturally, and we both agreed that we'd love to do it.

**NELLY KORDA:** It was a great way to kind of get to know each other, too. I met Tony, I think, at THE PLAYERS in '21 just passing by, and then we got to hang out a little bit at the Masters earlier this year.

But yeah, I think organically our personalities match really well, and I think it was a great fit for us.

**Q. What else do you have in common since you've gotten to know each other over the past few years?**

**TONY FINAU:** I would say the biggest thing is we both love sports and we come from sports families. Obviously with her brother and sister and just their family in general, they're very competitive and they love sports, and I grew up the same way. I think we have that parallel.

In a sense, to me, I look up to Nelly. Even though she's younger than me, she's an incredible golfer. She's been the No. 1 player in the world in the women's game, and she's someone that I think quite frankly a lot of us can still even learn from even on the men's side.

I'll be looking to pick up a few tips. Yesterday I asked her about chipping. She's an incredible chipper on this Bermuda, growing up in Florida. I didn't grow up on Bermuda, so I'm always trying to get little tips on how to chip around these greens, and she's as good a chipper as you'll see on Bermuda. I'm sure on any type of grass but especially Bermuda. I already picked up a few things just watching her yesterday



**NELLY KORDA:** And I think just the fact that we're both super family oriented, too. I was sad to find out that the Finau crew was not going to be here this week, but the time that we did get to hang out at the Masters earlier this year was so much fun getting to see their whole family dynamic, how close they are. It's really, really special to see.

**Q. Nelly, you guys have been playing for more and more money on the LPGA, but this week you guys are playing for a combined \$4 million purse. What do you think this is going to mean for the LPGA going forward, not just competing on a stage with the PGA TOUR but also competing for this high purse level?**

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, I think every year our tour is making strides forward with increasing prize money, and obviously there are better and better players out there. If you give us the platform, I feel like we will perform and we will bring it.

Every year I think the women's game is constantly getting elevated and getting to play alongside the men for equal prize money is just another step forward, and I think as Tony said, can't wait to see what this event is going to hold in the future, and I think that it's exciting to just be a little small piece of it. But I think it's a great step for our future.

**Q. Today's news about the rollback of the ball will affect both of you. Your reactions, each of you, when you heard this was coming and now it's officially here?**

**NELLY KORDA:** I honestly don't have too much knowledge on it. I didn't kind of hear about it until obviously that it was passed until after my round. I don't know, I think it's going into effect in 2028, right, and so I'll be 30 by then, so I don't know -- I don't know too much about it to really comment on it as of right now.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I kind of share the same sentiments. I didn't know about it until after I was done playing, and when I did find out, it was just a few minutes before I walked in here

The thing is we've all known that this could potentially be coming over the last few years. It's been talked about for a very long time, whether it's the driver that was going to change or the golf ball, so we've been talking about a rollback for a couple years

I can't say it's like surprising, but now that it's here, there's a date, it's official, and no matter where you stand, we're going to have to deal with it starting in '28

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, and you're just going to have to adapt. It's all just about adapting. Technology constantly changes, and the best players are still going to be the best players. It's just about who's going to adapt the quickest and the easiest.

**Q. Have you guys got a team name or have you heard anybody refer to you as a team?**

**TONY FINAU:** Our team name is Team FiNelly and Certified Fresh, and that comes from Finau Fresh, and she's Certified Finau Fresh.

**NELLY KORDA:** Yeah, I got certified yesterday. I was pretty happy.



**THE MODERATOR:** We appreciate your time, and good luck at the Grant Thornton Invitational.

