

2025 Women's Senior



July 21-23
Highwood Golf

Celina Lam

2024 Alberta Women's Senior Champion



Q: When you reflect on your victory at the Alberta Women's Senior Championship at Pine Hills Golf Club, what memories are most vivid?

Lam: "It was a confusing time. My mom had just passed away, so there was a lot of stuff going on and I hadn't been playing. So I just went out and I thought, 'OK, we just play.' I guess there was a feeling of being relaxed. There was no expectations or any of that, and that's what happened. It was kind of like a blur."

Q: While grieving the loss of a loved one, a lot of competitors might have skipped the tournament ... Why was it important to you to tee it up?

Lam: "I'd taken care of everything, so everything was done, and I guess we all need a break. I needed a place to re-energize, to reconnect. I went with my husband and we see it as a vacation. We played a few rounds around the area. And it was exactly what I wanted it to be, and more."

Q: Was your mom on your mind during the event?

Lam: "Yes. I think it just made me feel calmer and more grounded and more focused and not to worry about what's around me. It's just, 'Here I am, on a beautiful golf course. And just golf.'"

Q: It's rare to see a back-to-back winner at one of Alberta Golf's provincial showdowns. What does it mean to be a repeat champ?

Lam: "It's still very unbelievable. I mean, the first time you win, you're like, 'Oh, wow.' And then the second time, it's just, 'Really? Really?!?' That's why I said that the whole event was more like a blur to me. If you asked me, what did I do well or what did I do wrong, I don't know. I was just looking at my score and I'm like, 'Wow, I did play really, really well.' As I told somebody, it was just, 'See ball, hit ball. See ball, hit ball.' And that's what happened."

Playing with a heavy heart as she mourned the death of one of her biggest fans, Lam was able to defend her provincial title. A member at Canal at Delacour, she finished four shots clear of the pack with a three-round tally of 8-over 227

Alberta Women's Senior Past Champions

2024 – Celina Lam

2023 – Celina Lam

2022 – Brenda Heyink

2021 – Kim Carrington

2020 – Kim Carrington

Alberta Women's Senior Interprovincial Team

2024 – Finished (5th)

Celina Lam

Lynn Kuehn

Lisa Hall

Jackie Little

2024 Alberta Women's Super Senior Champion



Q: When you reflect on your victory in the Super Senior category at the 2024 Alberta Women's Senior Championship at Pine Hills Golf Club, what memories are most vivid for you?

Little: "It was a road-trip with my two B.C. buddies whom I won't even say how long we've been friends and traveled together. It's always a fun week when we travel together to Alberta. I really liked the course. Course management is very important, which I think is my strong point. The first hole is a bit scary and I always felt relieved when I finished that hole. Fortunately, I did OK on it. Truthfully, I didn't think I had won, so it really was a wonderful surprise when they called my name as the winner."

Q: What was the strongest part of your game that week?

Little: "My short game is always a strong point, but I was happy with my long game, as I had been struggling with it up until that week. It helped a lot with building my confidence."

Q: As a sort of tournament-within-a-tournament, do you pay close attention to the super senior leaderboard?

Little: "I have to admit, I am not a strong leaderboard watcher. I have always tried to play within myself and do the best I can and let what happens happen. I have found, with experience, I am better to not watch what is going on. If you are asking do I prefer to win the senior rather than the super senior, I think we would all agree winning the senior is the priority. But when you get to be a certain age, it becomes a little harder and not likely so winning the super senior becomes just as important for us oldies. Haha."

Q: It's not unusual for us to see your name on the leaderboard in Alberta. What's the appeal of a summer trip to the Wild Rose Province, and why do you think you have had so much success here?

Little: "Alberta will always have a place in my heart. I was born and raised in Edmonton and began my golf journey at the age of 12 at Glendale Golf & Country Club. I played there until we left for B.C. in 1982. Prior to leaving, I had won two provincial junior championships and two provincial amateur championships, so I thought it would be so cool to win two senior championships and hopefully two super senior championships. Then I will have completed my golf goal in Alberta. I always feel good when I come back to my home province. Plus, I have made many friends through the years there, so it's not hard to feel very comfortable."

Little, who has roots in Alberta but lives in B.C., added to her stellar resume by topping the leaderboard in the 60-plus category. A representative of Balfour Golf Course, she finished three rounds in 14-over 233.

Alberta Women's Super Senior Past Champions

2024 – Jackie Little

2023 – Lynn Kuehn

2022 – Brenda Heyink

2021 – Ava Broderick

2020 – Jean Nitchke

Lynda Palahniuk

2024 Alberta Women's Diamond Champion



Q: When you reflect on your victory in the Diamond division at the Alberta Women's Senior Championship at Pine Hills Golf Club, what memories are most vivid for you?

Palahniuk: "It's the whole camaraderie and getting to see a bunch of the Alberta girls. I have two friends and we've been doing road-trips for the past 25 years, and so we're always looking for someplace to go and we've always enjoyed the company of the girls from Alberta. So we thought, 'Well ...' I had kind of been out of tournament golf. I'd had a few different injuries. So we thought it would be a nice trip from Kelowna. It's beautiful scenery all the way there. And then it was great to catch up with a couple of girls that I've been friends with in Alberta for a number of years."

Q: You mentioned that you'd been out of tournament golf for a while. What did you enjoy most about getting back into the swing of it?

Palahniuk: "I just like road-trips with my friends, basically. And I just like touching base with some of my friends. I was just there for fun, certainly with no expectations of winning anything. That was just an added bonus."

Q: Were you keeping tabs on the leaderboard in the Diamond division?

Palahniuk: "To be honest, I didn't even know there was a Diamond division. In B.C., we call it the Super Super Senior. I won our first Super Super Senior in 2022. That's the first year that we started doing that for people over 70, and I had no idea that Alberta had taken on that same kind of format. So after two days, I looked and I thought, 'Oh my goodness, they have a Diamond division!' The girls were teasing me about that."

Q: Indeed they do, and it's always nice to win a trophy, isn't it?

Palahniuk: "Yes, for sure."

Palahniuk, who is enshrined in the Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame and now lives in B.C., road-tripped to the Alberta Women's Senior Championship and wound up returning home with a trophy. A member at Kelowna Golf & Country Club, Palahniuk scored bragging rights among the 70-and-over crowd with a three-round tally of 40-over 259.

Alberta Women's Diamond Past Champions

2024 – Lynda Palahniuk

2023 – Ena Spalding

Highwood Golf

*is always happy to answer
when opportunity knocks*

By Gord Montgomery

When opportunity knocks one best answer the door. And that's exactly what Highwood Golf did when Alberta Golf approached the course about hosting a major championship for the second straight year.

Highwood Golf's Head Professional, Dan Warwaruk, noted hosting big events is nothing new to this club as they prepare to host the Alberta Women's Senior who are set to tee it up for a 54-hole competition in July.



"We had the Men's Senior last year and when I got together with Alberta Golf, they jokingly said, 'Well, what event are you going to host next year?' Typically, just for equity and geographical representation it's good for these events to move around the province. We do a really good job hosting, and enjoy hosting, so I just joked back, 'We'll take 'em all! We're like a collector. We'll take the seniors, the kids, we'll do this, we'll do that.'"

Warwaruk explained that a big part of his job at Highwood Golf is promoting the club explaining, "A really good way is to host the best golfers in the province and we have a good course for competition. I'm at a club whose members embrace these sorts of things."

A benefit for the members is the fact there's another nine hole loop here, so they aren't shunted off to the side while the tournament runs. The Head Pro also noted that they're fortunate to enjoy reciprocal play with other area courses.

With a push as of late to get younger girls involved in the game, an event like the Women's Senior Championship is a vital showcase. "I think that ability to show the best players in the province playing here, whether male or female, for our young girls there is some pride there. The best are playing the course they play. Some of these young players, 10 to 16, look at these older ladies and go, 'Wow! I can golf for life and I'm lucky I already have Highwood as my home base.' It's kind of like a pride thing but it's also, 'I love golf already, and I can golf the rest of my life'. These women in the tournament have been doing it their whole lives and that kind of just validates the young girls' decision to golf here."

As for what the competitors will face when they hit these fairways, Warwaruk noted this course can jump up unexpectedly, especially toward the end of a round.

"It's very traditional, no tricks. It's very straightforward. Skill is rewarded. It's basically going to filter the best player out of those three days and generally the best player, over three days, is going to win. The golf course isn't overly long," about 5,200 to 5,500 yards for this event. "Regardless of the tees played, it's a very demanding second-shot golf course. The greens are small and that puts a requirement on your short game. No matter how good an iron player you are, you are going to miss greens here so putting and chipping are at a premium. Regardless of the age or the gender of the golfer, it's a firm test. A fair test but a firm test."

When asked about areas that will particularly challenge the players, Warwaruk pointed to one hole in particular. And the fact it's the closing hole adds extra weight.

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"The easy answer is, you can't take a break here," he related. "It's easy to take a big number if you don't focus. But, if you look at the last two events we've had here, the 2022 Mid-Am Championship and the Men's Senior last year, in both events the leader was on the 18th hole with a minimum of a three shot lead — and disaster struck! So, the 54th hole of the event has played

a pivotal role in determining the winner in the last two Provincial events we've had here."

What makes that hole key is the fact it's a tough driving par-4 with the green protected by water. Hit a poor tee shot and it calls for a big gamble to reach the green in regulation or hitting a lay-up shot. "All parts of this golf course provide a test but certainly the 18th hole in the last two events has just been a shocker!"

So when opportunity knocks in this event this year, the leader best be prepared for what could possibly happen when that knock is answered on the final hole of the tournament. ■