



LPGA MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS REPORT 2022-23



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ABOUT SPONSORUNITED

Launched in 2018, SponsorUnited is the leading global sports and entertainment intelligence platform, delivering real-time trends and on-demand research that provide invaluable insights.

With over 10M data points, 1.1M deals, and 250K brands across sports, entertainment, media, and talent, our SaaS database enables brands, agencies, and rights holders to partner more effectively. By connecting the entire sponsorship ecosystem through the most comprehensive data available anywhere, SponsorUnited is fueling smarter partnerships.

SponsorUnited debuted at No. 145 on the 2022 Inc. 5000 list – the most prestigious ranking of the fastest-growing private companies in America.

INTRODUCTION

To say that women's golf is having a moment may be the understatement of the decade.

The impact of the pandemic and shifting demographics are sending women to the golf course in unprecedented numbers – some 6.4 million worldwide this year, according to the National Golf Foundation, up from 5.6 million in 2019. Girls now represent 38% of all golfers under age 18, versus 14% when the NGF began tracking golf participation in 1986.

The LPGA's growth reflects this dynamic surge and future potential. In a seminal milestone in its 73-year history, the purses of this year's 33 official events will surpass a record-breaking \$101 million – an all-time, single-season high, and more than double the total prize pool just a decade ago.

Against this backdrop, women's pro golf continues to diversify as barriers to entry fall away. Players like Yin Ruoning – who became the second Chinese golfer to win a major with her victory at the 2023 KPMG Women's PGA Championship on June 25 – reflect the increasingly global face of the LPGA, whose members hail from more than 50 countries. And in May, the LPGA unveiled a new line of equipment at Walmart to increase access to the game for female beginners and young players.

Meanwhile, more and more brands are scrambling to gain a foothold in the sport as its momentum builds. The number of active brands in the LPGA has doubled since 2019 – totaling more than 1,000 for the first time, as certain sponsors reap up to a 400% return on their investment. And social causes are coming to the fore: a whopping 83% of LPGA sponsors are actively buying assets promoting diversity and inclusion.

As the popularity of women's golf continues to soar, we're excited to unveil the LPGA Marketing Partnerships Report 2022-2023. Authored jointly by SponsorUnited's Marketing Research & Insights, Analytics and Marketing teams, it delivers an in-depth analysis of more than 1,200 brands, 75 athletes, and nearly 780 social posts between June 9, 2022 and June 9th, 2023.



KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

- 1** The number of active brands across LPGA tournaments, official partners, and women's golf athletes have doubled since 2019, totaling over 1,200. Even more remarkably, the number of brands partnering with these athletes skyrocketed more than 1,000% over the same period.
- 2** Brands sponsoring the LPGA are reaping up to a 400% return on their investment, thanks to the burgeoning popularity and visibility of women's golf – while boosting brand recognition, consumer engagement, and sales in the process.
- 3** Aon, Epson, Coca-Cola, and Zinus lead the list (in that order) of active brands sponsoring women's golf tournaments, while Food Products, Business Services, Consumer Products, and Technology dominate category sponsorship. The Financial category grew 12% since last year to claim the top spot.
- 4** LPGA tournaments have inked deals across 163 subcategories (and counting) thus far this year, versus 165 in 2022, 153 in 2021, and 143 in 2020. Emerging subcategories include Bakery, Office Supply, Oncology, and Spirits (rum), while Hard Cider remains conspicuously unclaimed – presenting a prominent opportunity for enterprising brands in this red-hot beverage sector.
- 5** While the LPGA is increasingly addressing sustainability and social impact, there's still plenty of room to grow: just 13% of all tournaments have sold an asset related to these causes. Meanwhile, a whopping 83% of LPGA sponsors are actively buying assets promoting diversity and inclusion.
- 6** Women's golf athletes are steadily heightening their social media profile, averaging 15% follower growth from 2022 to 2023. The even bigger social story: their astounding 4.6% average engagement rate – surpassing not only their PGA, WNBA, WTA, and NWSL counterparts, but also double the average of athletes in the five major U.S. pro sports leagues.



Stars On the Rise

Three fledgling LPGA phenoms epitomize the mushrooming growth and potential of women's golf



ROSE ZHANG

- Recently turned pro after winning back-to-back NCAA titles in May of this year
- Rising social media profile (3rd in follower increase and 10th in audience engagement among LPGA athletes in the past year)
- Partnerships with adidas and Callaway



ATTHAYA THITIKUL

- The 20-year-old rising star won the LPGA 2022 Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year, after first becoming the youngest person ever to win a professional tournament at the 2017 Ladies European Thailand Championship, at age 14.
- Ranks among the top 5 women's golf athletes on Instagram with 80% YoY follower increase
- Ranks among the top 5 in total brand deals across all women's golf athletes



YIN RUONING

- Won the KPMG Women's PGA Championship on June 25 (2023) at age 20 – her first major title – following her win at the LPGA DIO Implant LA Open earlier this year
- Only the second player from China to win an LPGA event
- Deal with European asset manager Amundi signals international sponsorships to come

The stellar performance and marketability of these emerging superstars are attracting brands to the LPGA – and helping grow viewership, purse size, and overall visibility for women's golf worldwide.



SUCCESS STORIES



CELEBRATING THE GREEN

PRESENTED BY 

Dow Greens the LPGA

The global material sciences leader brings sustainability to the women's tour in a big way



SUMMARY

As Official Sustainability Resource of the LPGA and Ladies European Tour (LET) since 2021, Dow has seized the opportunity to educate and affect change within the LPGA/LET ecosystem by using its platform to demonstrate that sustainability is multi-faceted: social, environmental, and economic.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

- Entitlement of the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational (GLBI) LPGA Tournament
- Supports the Dow LPGA Leadership Academy
- Developed the LPGA Acceleration Grants Certification Program for tournaments
- Created the LPGA Sustainability Task Force to advance the LPGA Sustainability Mission
- Launched the LPGA and LET "Celebrating the Green" web sites to showcase sustainability storytelling within the leagues
- Established the LPGA Green Driver Award, recognizing excellence in sustainability activation amongst LPGA Tournaments
- Supports the LPGA Girls Golf Sustainability Experience Day with sustainability-focused curriculum enhancements

RESULTS

- Dow GLBI event recognized as the first Golf Environment Organization (GEO) Foundation for Sustainable Golf-certified tournament on the LPGA Tour
- Successful launch of LPGA and LET "Celebrating the Green" websites
- Successful launch of LPGA Sustainability Acceleration Grant Certification Program for tournament GEO Certification in Sustainability, with 14 tournaments utilizing the grants and more joining the program in 2023
- Successful launch of inaugural LPGA Green Driver Award, presented to the Chevron Championship in 2022





Epson's Big Opportunity

The technology leader raises its profile as the new title sponsor of the LPGA's Official Qualifying Tour

SUMMARY

In January 2022, the LPGA and Seiko Epson Corporation—commonly known as Epson—announced a five-year deal making the technology giant the title sponsor of the league's Official Qualifying Tour, renaming it the Epson Tour and underscoring their joint commitment to diversity, sustainability, and enriching communities. As the most established qualifying tour in the world, the "Road to the LPGA" annually attracts players from more than 40 countries.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

- Launched last year, the Epson Tour Ambassador Program gave \$10K to every 2021 Epson Tour graduate to jumpstart their LPGA Tour journey
- Epson increased the standard tournament purse size to \$200K.
- The company enhanced the experience for Epson Tour athletes by reducing entry fees by 10% per tournament for each player throughout the season.

RESULTS

Epson, which ranks third by number of deals in the LPGA, has seen a 400% return in media value on its investment, thanks to Epson Tour and LPGA brand opportunities. Meanwhile, Epson Tour total prize money increased from \$3.8M in 2021 to nearly \$5M in 2023, a new league record.





Aon Levels the Playing Field

The company's singular competition sends a powerful message about gender parity across professional sports

SUMMARY

By partnering with both the LPGA and PGA Tours on a unique, season-long competition highlighting the game's best players as they navigate some of the most strategically challenging holes on tour, the global consulting giant – which ranks second by number of deals in the LPGA – continues to underscore its commitment to gender parity in professional sports.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES



- The one-of-a-kind Aon Risk Reward Challenge showcases the world's best professional golfers as they tackle the most strategically challenging holes across both the LPGA and PGA Tours. The challenge takes the best two scores from every participating event a player competes in throughout the season. The players who best navigate the challenges – measured by the lowest average score to par on these holes – wins the Aon Trophy and an equal \$1 million prize.
- The Challenge's multi-platform strategy includes broadcast integration, PGA TOUR and LPGA digital content, onsite branding at LPGA Tournaments, and exclusive, inside-the-ropes experiences and networking events for Aon clients and colleagues around the world.
- In 2022, the LPGA partnered with Aon's Human Capital Group on an Epson Tour project to assess players' talent potential. Using Aon's ADEPT-15 personality assessment technology – a tool that takes a scientific, trait-led approach to measure the core behaviors required for success across all roles within an organization – the LPGA has created "Success Profiles" for its top players, using these insights in strategic talent development.

RESULTS

One of the most successful and resonant partnerships in the LPGA, the Aon Risk Reward Challenge and its surrounding narrative manifests in virtually all aspects of the LPGA Tour season.




Insights by KPMG
STROKES GAINED RANKS THIS SEASON

JPN **NASA HATAOKA**
TOUR RANK

TOTAL	+1.52	8th
TEE-TO-GREEN	+1.34	7th
APPROACH	+1.03	3rd

▶ PLAYERS WITH 10+ ROUNDS



KPMG Answers the Call

The global accounting titan transforms the LPGA with a game-changing performance analytics platform



NEW

LPGA MARKETING
PARTNERSHIPS
REPORT 2022-23

SUMMARY

The second-longest Major on the LPGA Tour, KPMG Women's PGA Championship boasts a total prize fund of >\$10M and elevated benefits for athletes. KPMG became the first LPGA title sponsor to lead the way in empowering women on and off the golf course through the KPMG Women's Leadership Summit, a daylong event that invests in aspiring women leaders to foster their advancement towards C-suite positions.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

- KPMG approached the LPGA to provide advanced shot-level analytics capabilities that were not available in the women's game at the time, despite similar analytics playing an important role in the men's game for many years.
- In 2021, alongside the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, the KPMG Performance Insights program launched--a groundbreaking platform offering data insights and advanced performance analytics.
- The analysis is used to highlight player performance across the LPGA through digital, social, and broadcast content; deliver critical information to players to help improve their game; and assist members of the media in delivering higher quality, more accurate reporting on the tremendous athletes on the LPGA Tour.
- In 2023, the program expanded to include a user-friendly web portal, granting fans easy access to advanced shot-level data, including historical and season rankings, and individual tournament performance.

RESULTS

KPMG has been instrumental in elevating women and women's golf by supporting LPGA athletes, empowering female business leaders, and enhancing the experience for athletes, fans, and media globally.

"From a brand perspective, there's no doubt that the branding around the course, the recognition, the incredible partnership with NBC and The Golf Channel and Peacock provides us great exposure. But at the end of the day, we want that exposure to translate into our commitment to diversity and more equity with women in sports." — Paul Knopp, Chair and Chief Executive Officer, KPMG US





Versant's Visionary Approach

The vision care provider aims to empower women through pioneering leadership events



SUMMARY

Versant Health is one of the nation's leading managed vision care companies and its purpose is to help people see everything so they can become anything they set their sights on—in their personal lives, in their communities, and in the world. Versant Health has partnered with the LPGA as its Official Managed Vision Care Provider since 2018 with the common goal of advancing women and girls in sports, their careers, and in life.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

Versant Health's activation with the LPGA focuses on empowering women in the workplace and driving deeper connection and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including clients, prospects, industry partners, employees, and other members of the communities it serves. In addition to standard hospitality, Pro-Am teams and digital assets, the main pillar of Versant Health's partnership with the LPGA is presenting sponsorship of two Women's Leadership Days per year.

Taking place during tournament week, these Women's Leadership Days enable attendees to develop and strengthen their skill sets, build networks, and inspire long-lasting personal and professional change. Each event sponsorship provides Versant Health with the opportunity to work in conjunction with the LPGA and tournament operator to develop the theme of the event and associated messaging, host 20 – 40 guests, participate in the program with opening and closing remarks and panelists for roundtable discussions, and provide gifting for all attendees.

PARTNERSHIP RESULTS

Versant Health and the LPGA are proud of the authentic connections made through these events. Attendees and participants represent a diverse mix of national and local companies in and outside of golf along with individuals in various stages of their careers, all with a shared goal of gender equity and women's empowerment.

Hosting approximately 450 guests to date at Women's Leadership Days with total attendance of about 1,750, Versant Health has been able to further enhance client and various stakeholder relationships through the events, foster new relationships among all attendees, and empower women in all aspects of their lives.





BRANDS & CATEGORIES



Brand Rankings

Most active, new, and expanding brands across LPGA tournaments (by number of sponsorships)

MOST ACTIVE BRANDS



NEW BRANDS



*New in the past 12 months

EXPANDING BRANDS



While Rolex and Aon have consistently traded the two top spots in recent years, their sponsorship deals diverge significantly in terms of asset allocation. Rolex allocates 54% of assets to media and 26% to on-course signage, versus 36% and 42% for Aon, respectively.


MOST ACTIVE CATEGORIES - LPGA TOURNAMENTS

RANKED BY NUMBER OF SPONSORSHIP DEALS

1 
Financial

2 
Food Products

3 
Business Services

4 
Consumer Products

5 
Technology

The Financial category has steadily climbed to the summit of the sponsorship leaderboard in the past four years, moving from fifth to third place between 2020 and 2021, then to runner-up in 2022 before claiming the top spot this year.

EMERGING CATEGORIES - LPGA TOURNAMENTS

RANKED BY NUMBER OF NEW SPONSORSHIPS



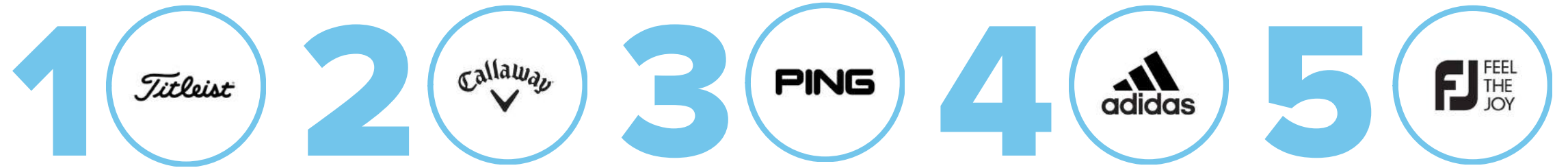
After Ron Viejo de Caldas rum sponsored the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions last January, Hard Seltzer remains the only alcohol subcategory unclaimed by the LPGA. Perhaps not for long though: notably, Hard Cider brands buying sponsorship or media have increased 23% across team sports, individual sports, and arts and entertainment since 2021.



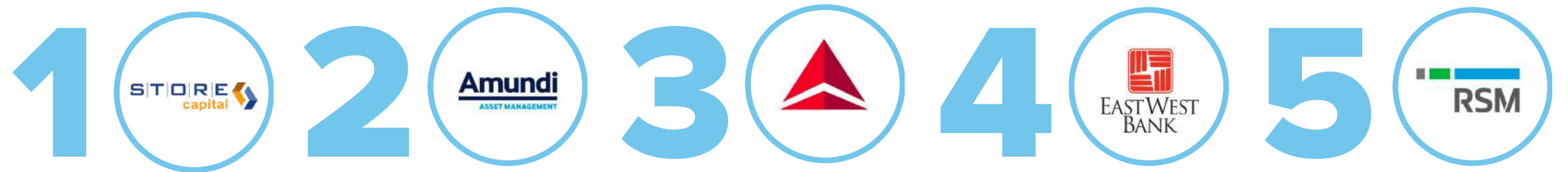
Brand Rankings

Most active, new, and expanding brands across women's golf athletes (ranked by number of brand deals)

MOST ACTIVE BRANDS



NEW BRANDS



*New for the past 12 months

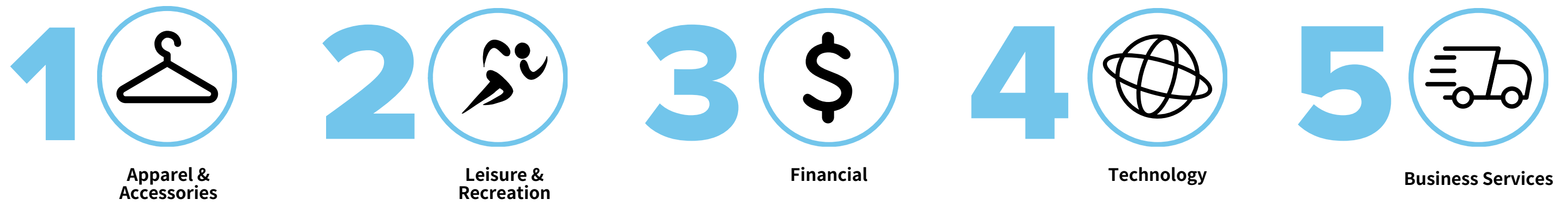
EXPANDING BRANDS



Nike's social campaigns with women's golf athletes have yielded remarkably high audience engagement rates: four of its top five best-performing pro golf campaigns feature LPGA players. Maria Fassi leads the list at more than 5.5%, surpassing PGA stars like Scottie Scheffler, Tony Finau, and Tommy Fleetwood.

MOST ACTIVE CATEGORIES - WOMEN'S GOLF ATHLETES

RANKED BY NUMBER OF BRAND DEALS



Apparel & Accessories reigns supreme in women's golf athlete deals, accounting for 22% of all deals. Notably, the category—along with Leisure & Recreation and Financial—comprise more than half of all partnerships with players.

EMERGING CATEGORIES - WOMEN'S GOLF ATHLETES

RANKED BY NUMBER OF NEW BRAND DEALS



Construction &
Architecture
Firms



Appliances &
Kitchen



Condiments, Oils,
Spices & Sauces



SaaS

In the past year, women's professional golfers have witnessed an impressive 8% surge in the number of sponsorship categories, reaching a remarkable milestone of surpassing 100 categories. For reference, this is a noteworthy 30% higher than the number of categories with sponsorship deals compared to their counterparts in professional women's tennis.

MOST ENDORSED ATHLETES

RANKED BY TOTAL NUMBER OF BRANDS ACROSS SPONSORSHIPS + DIGITAL DEALS



Lexi Thompson
19 brands



Nelly Korda
16 brands



Gaby Lopez
15 brands



Atthaya Thitkul
14 brands



Georgia Hall
13 brands



Jessica Korda
13 brands



Leona Maguire
12 brands



Danielle Kang
12 brands



Olivia Cowan
12 brands



Megan Khang
11 brands

Lexi Thomson has embarked on an incredible sponsorship journey, reigning as the leading women's golfer in securing sponsorship deals for over four consecutive years. This season, she has extended her lead over runner-up Nelly Korda, further solidifying her dominance in the endorsement realm.



ASSETS

MOST COMMONLY PURCHASED TOURNAMENT ASSETS

RANKED BY VOLUME OF BRANDS

Interior Grounds Logo / Name



American Express x U.S. Women's Open

Teebox Barrier



HSBC Bank x HSBC Women's World Championship

Interior Grounds Rotating Ad on Video Board



Acumatica x Mizuho Americas Open

Not only is the Teebox Barrier the second most valuable asset by volume within the LPGA, its usage rate compared to other assets outpaces the PGA Tour by 11% – highlighting its exceptional appeal to women’s golf sponsors.

*League partner benefits like IP, category exclusivities, and impact initiatives not included



The LPGA Goes All In on DEI

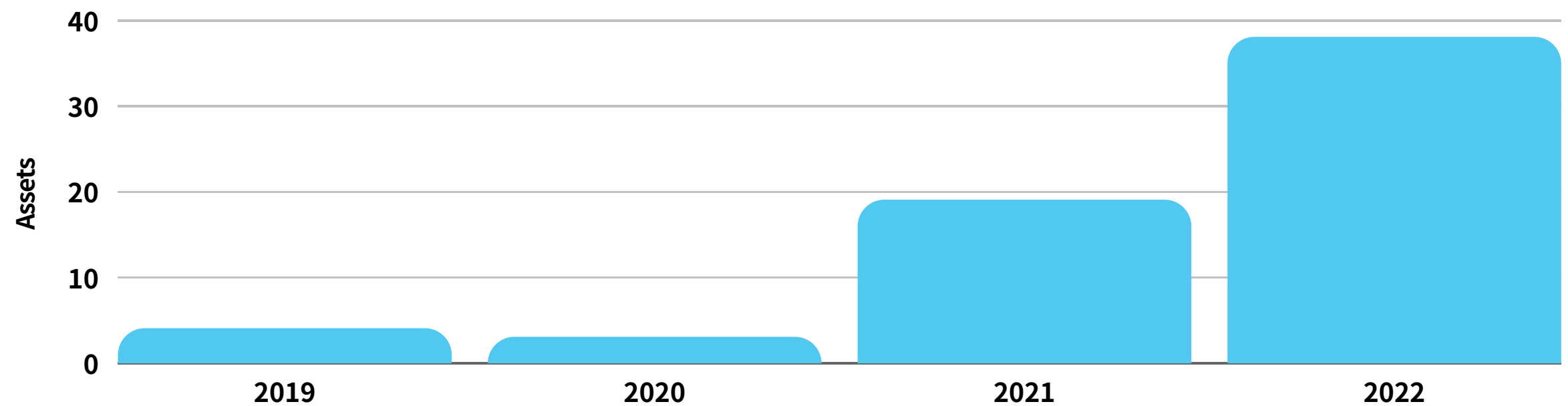
Surging DEI engagement signals the tour's burgeoning efforts to elevate equity for all



KEY STATISTICS

- Since 2019, the volume of LPGA sponsors activating Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) initiatives within the LPGA increased a staggering 625%.
- A whopping 83% of LPGA sponsors are actively buying assets promoting diversity and inclusion.
- Twenty percent of LPGA properties have successfully sold a DEI asset so far this year, versus 9% in 2019.
- Women's golf athletes are also demonstrating their support for DEI initiatives. Michelle Wie West, for example, recently took the lead in a new women's partnership initiative with golf equipment company LA Golf to provide equitable and fair support for LPGA players.

YoY Growth in # of DEI Assets



DEI asset sales in the LPGA have increased 122% since 2019, led by the Apparel & Accessory category, as the Tour and its athletes ramp up their efforts to foster an equitable and inclusive environment for everyone, both on and off the course.

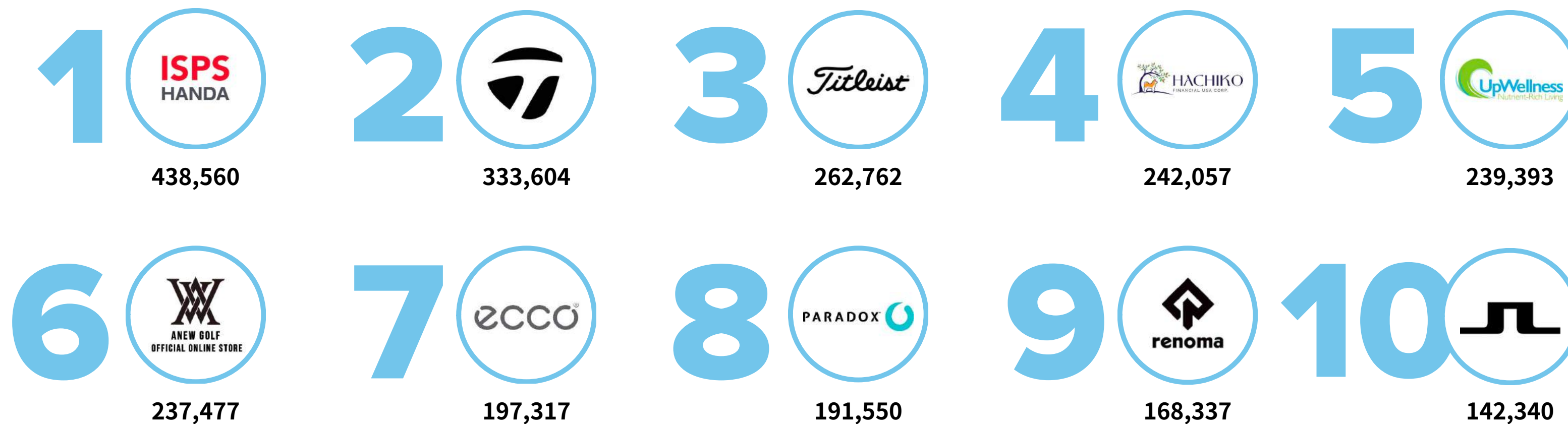
SOCIAL



lydsko  Week 1 of season #10 on
@lpga_tour 

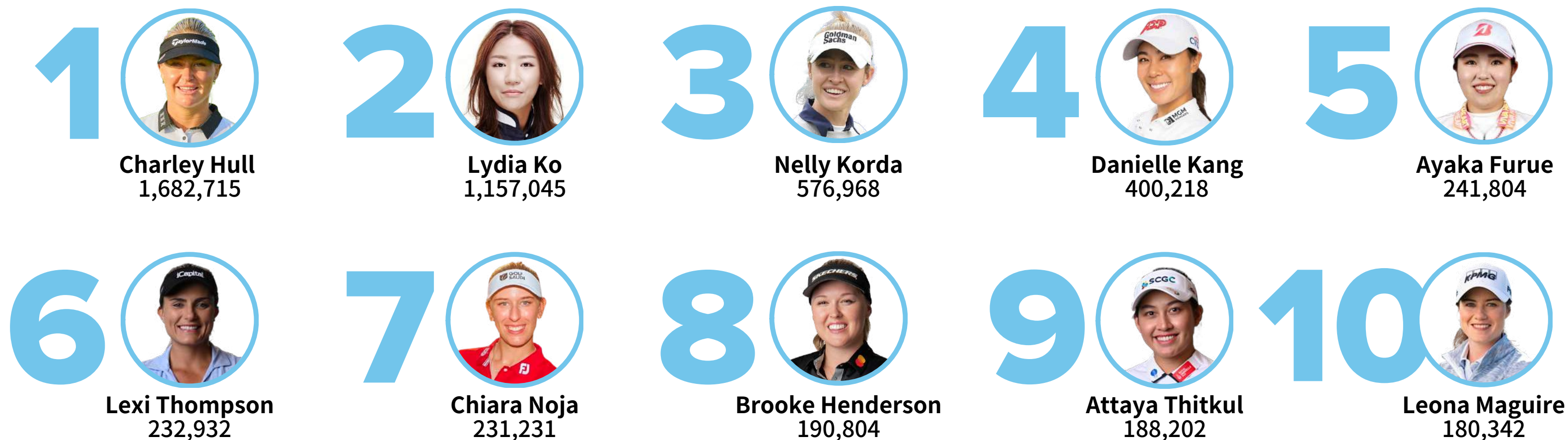
MOST ENGAGING BRANDS

RANKED BY TOTAL ENGAGEMENT WITH ATHLETES ON SOCIAL MEDIA



ISPS Handa's social campaigns with women's golfers have proven wildly successful, with Lydia Ko's and Charley Hull's social campaign with the Japanese nonprofit ISPS Handa accounting for more than 80% of the brand's total branded engagement.

MOST ENGAGING ATHLETES RANKED BY TOTAL BRANDED ENGAGEMENT



Charley Hull's remarkable performance in total branded engagement puts her in a league of her own: she's the only women's golf athlete to rank among the top 5 female professional athletes by this metric since 2020.

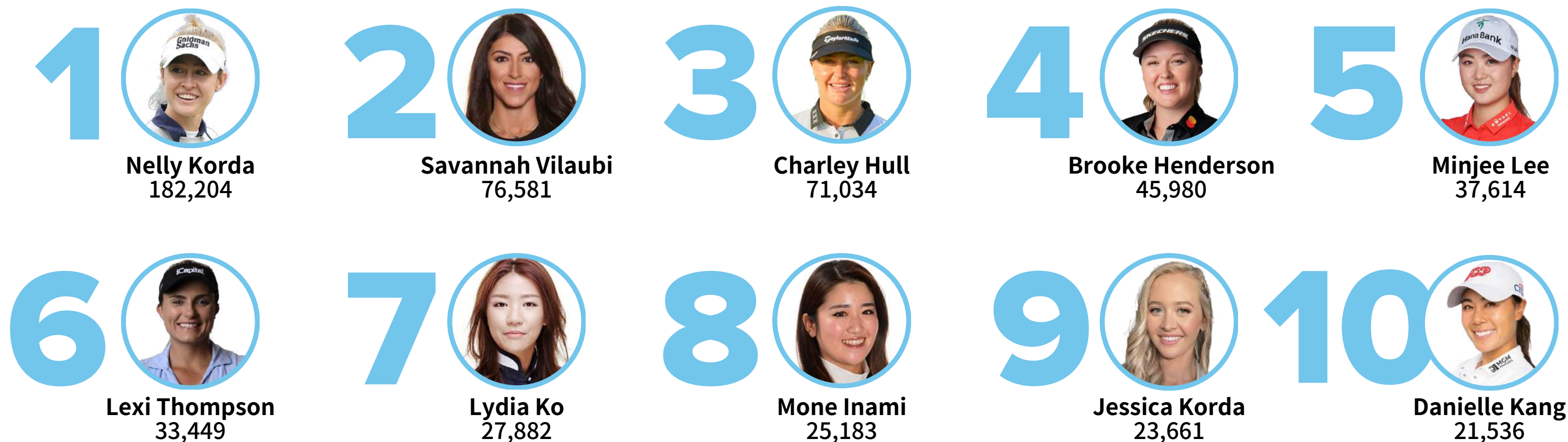
MOST ACTIVE ATHLETES RANKED BY TOTAL BRANDED POSTS



Mina Harigae's 38 branded social posts surpass the women's golf athlete average by double, and make her the sole LPGA player among the top 15 female professional athletes by branded post volume, at #5 on the list.

TOP ATHLETES BY FOLLOWER GROWTH

RANKED BY NET INCREASE IN TOTAL FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Thanks to a huge surge in popularity on social media over the past year, Nelly Korda now officially ranks among the top 65 women's pro athletes* by total followers – joining Lexi Thompson as the only two LPGA players in this prestigious group.

METHODOLOGY

This report offers an in-depth analysis of brand sponsorships, endorsements and social engagement across the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and women's golf athletes across various tours. Compiled using SponsorUnited's proprietary platform, the data encompasses more than 1,200 brands, 75 athletes, and nearly 780 social posts.

The report was jointly authored by SponsorUnited's Marketing Research & Insights and Marketing Departments, using data from January 2019 through April 2023.

THANK YOU

Want more insights? Email info@SponsorUnited.com