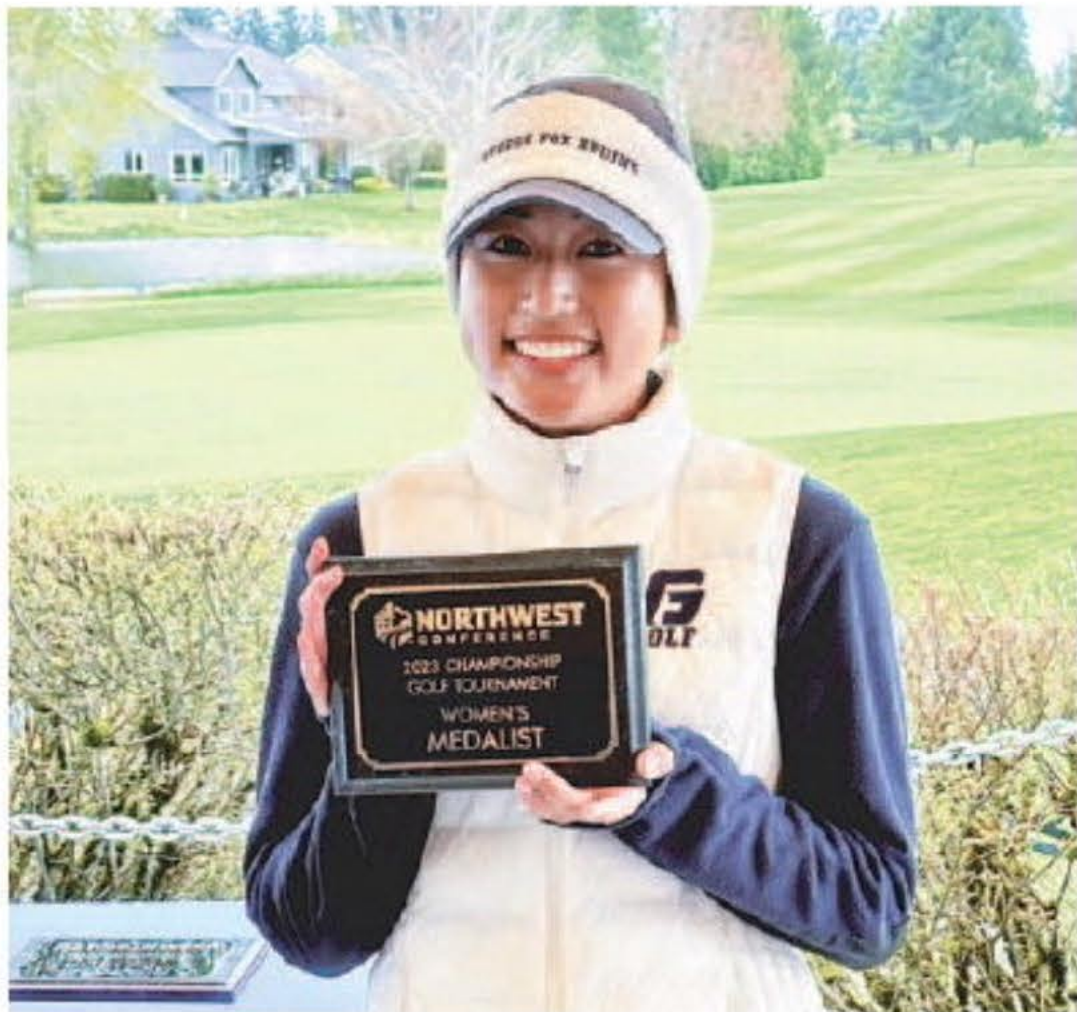


sports

HAWAII GROWN REPORT



COURTESY GEORGE FOX ATHLETICS

Alison Takamiya held the Northwest Conference medalist plaque.

Punahou alumna dreams big after second top golfer honor

By Billy Hull
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When Alison Takamiya began looking at colleges as a junior at Punahou, she didn't feel her golf game was ready for the Division I level.

Four years later, her long-term goal is to play professional golf.

There are many reasons for how the two-time Northwest Conference Player of the Year has taken her game to a level that maybe she at times questioned whether she would ever reach.

ALISON TAKAMIYA

>> **School:** George Fox

>> **Class:** Junior

>> **High school:**
Punahou (2020)

One of them is her decision to attend George Fox University and play for the one coach she felt believed in her.

"From the very first time I met her, I felt that (George Fox women's golf coach Mary Jo McCloskey) was someone who I knew would

always support me," Takamiya said in a phone interview Tuesday. "A couple of schools I reached out to never even got an answer back. She seemed genuinely excited for me to come to her school."

It has turned out to be a missed opportunity for those other schools and a huge get for George Fox.

Takamiya earned medalist honors as a freshman at the NWC Championships and backed it up with a second

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GOLFER

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title this past weekend at OGA Golf Course in Woodburn, Ore.

She was the only golfer to finish under par, shooting a 2-under 70 in Sunday's final round to win the tournament at 2-under 142.

Takamiya finished three shots ahead of two teammates. No other golfer in the 40-player field finished better than 13 over for two rounds.

"I remember the first day I shot even, and it's a good score, but I just remember feeling like I had left shots out there," Takamiya said. "It was really a scramble day for me. I was just being too careful with approach shots in general, but I was able to get it together because my putting was really good both days."

Takamiya won six tournaments this season, including the first two of the fall and the last three of the spring.

All that is left this season is the NCAA Division III National Championships in May at El Campeon Golf Course in Howey-In-The-Hills, Fla.

Takamiya finished sixth at nationals as a freshman and hopes to check another achievement off her list of short-term goals.

"It's a huge goal of mine for us to win (nationals) as a team, and I think this year we have a really good shot at it because our team has worked so hard," Takamiya said. "We'll go to practice outside the designated practice time and then just working the mental game as whole and also physically getting stronger too."

Takamiya's long-term goal is to play professionally one day. What might have seemed out of the realm of possibility years ago is now a legitimate goal to strive for.

Last September, Takamiya played alongside professionals Ryann O'Toole and Christina Kim in a pro-am at the LPGA Portland Classic.

Upon meeting Takamiya for the first time, Kim started out by saying, "Hey, I heard you're a rock star." By the time the round was over, Takamiya realized there might be more to this golf thing after college.

"What really kind of motivated me to consider playing golf professionally is my coach told me Christina told her I have what it takes to be on the tour," Takamiya said. "Obviously I need more work in general, especially in the distance aspect, but I wasn't far off and I think hearing that from someone who has been a professional for so long is so cool."

Takamiya participated in the Monday qualifier for the tournament and said she finished four strokes outside of qualifying. She plans to do it again this September.

"I'll be trying again, and I think my game has improved a lot since then," Takamiya said. "Just putting myself in as many opportunities as possible to get to that level would be the main goal I'd say."



COURTESY NAJI SAKER

Alison Takamiya won the NWC Championships for the second year in a row.