

Canadian Pacific Women's Open

Sunday, August 28, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club

Paula Reto

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very happy to welcome in the winner of the 2022 CP Women's Open Paula Reto from South Africa winning for the first time on the LPGA Tour.

Paula, congratulations. It's been about an hour since that putt fell, but it seems like an eternity. How much of a whirlwind is this and what are your thoughts as you celebrate your first win?

PAULA RETO: I'm really, really excited and just proud of myself for being able to stick through the shots and the routines. Sometimes I find that's really hard to do, especially if you know you have only a few holes left.

But I was really nervous, especially I started pulling a few shots and I told myself, okay, just stay in the moment and breathe. You go through all those things that you think will help.

Being able to shoot 9-under did kind of help me be able to be more positive for the next three days.

So I'm really excited. I'm excited to celebrate with everybody, and I'm glad my first win was here in Canada for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about your front nine. You started with a birdie on the first hole; added birdies on 3, 6, 8, 9. Got off to a hot start. Was that maybe intentional, or were you just feeling some vibes? What was that hot early start you had to your round?

PAULA RETO: Well, it's kind of nice to not be the leader starting off the day on the fourth day, so I sort of had more of an aggressive mindset I would say. I had a couple short putts, which was nice, too.

Then the back nine I started putting on the brakes, and that's probably not what you want to do. Like I said, I haven't really much been in this position, and I was just



trying to control myself and be in the moment.

You know, I'm happy that it all worked out. I feel like if Nelly birdied 18 maybe would've been more stressful.

THE MODERATOR: That led to my next question. You had Nelly playing well in front of, Lydia playing well in front of you, Hye-Jin playing well alongside you. Were you watching leaderboards? How aware were you of what you couldn't control, what was going on around you?

PAULA RETO: So I was trying not to watch the leaderboard. I sort of kind of know where the three girls in my group was, and so I was just trying to make sure I stay with them or maybe one or two ahead.

But that was the only thing I could control. You can't do too much. I wasn't watching leaderboards until I came to 17th.

THE MODERATOR: You got to the 17, you knew what was going on, and then you got to 18. Tell us about that second shot or the third shot I should say out of the rough there. That was beautiful to nestle yourself in close. What was going through your mind there?

PAULA RETO: Yeah, they moved 18 up and I had a 3-wood in, and my caddie has not been wanting me to hit 3-wood because the last four or five times we been hitting 3-wood it flares out to the right, which this one did. I said just give me one more chance. I will make sure this one draws. It still stayed out right.

But I just committed on that third shot. I knew if I just kind of you punch it the yardage I want, it should roll all the way up, give myself even a two foot, like a two-foot putt, and then I should be fine.

THE MODERATOR: One last question from me before we open it up. You're the second winner this year from South Africa, the fourth winner on the LPGA Tour ever from South Africa. How exciting is it to follow Ash two weeks ago? How much of an inspiration was that, and how excited are you now to be an LPGA winner from South Africa?



PAULA RETO: Yeah, so Ash was such an inspiration, especially being the AIG Women's Open and she was so calm and so great on those playoff holes. I told myself, you know what? I can also do it. I also want to do it.

Yeah, I think it always worked out. And being able to win on the LPGA is such a dream, and even being from South Africa -- and I did win in South Africa earlier in February, so I was like, Okay, I can do it again.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. Questions.

Q. Did you hear the champagne corks pop on 18 when you were lining up that birdie putt?

PAULA RETO: I did. I was like, okay, that's loud. But I really just tried to tell myself, okay, try to make this putt, but really sort of die it in so you can leave yourself with a small tap-in if anything.

But I did, yeah. It was kind of nice. (Smiling.)

Q. Congratulations. This is obviously a storeyed championship, a championship with a lot of history. What does it mean to you to win this championship specifically?

PAULA RETO: Oh, I mean, so much, and especially with Ottawa Golf Club and CP and Golf Canada. They've been around so long, and it's just nice to come back and do it here, especially with all the fans and the crowd and the volunteers and everybody. It's really nice.

It's something I'll always remember.

Q. Congratulations. As a follow-up to Adam's question, at the RBC Canadian Open Rory McIlroy spoke about how much it means to him to win national championships. Curious, do you have that same sort of passion for winning a national Open?

PAULA RETO: Yes, 100%, because it does feel like it's our sixth major and it's like the biggest tournament in Canada, so definitely it's such an amazing accomplishment and I'm really going to carry it with me for a long, long time.

Forever. (Smiling.)

Q. I hope this isn't a bad question, but recent form hasn't been all that great for you. You missed the cut three of the last four starts, and a tie for 58th. Was there that changed for you this week?

PAULA RETO: You know what? I have just been working on my swing and my game for the last year and a half, and

just really been babysitting my bad habits, which has led me to play a little bit better golf.

I always love coming to Canada. I love everybody here and the people. I just felt like maybe it's going to be my week, and then I had a great round the first round, so that always sets up for a great week regardless, yeah.

Q. Congratulations to my favorite South African.

PAULA RETO: Hey.

Q. How are you?

PAULA RETO: I'm good. How are you?

Q. Congratulating. Look, I wanted to ask you, this was probably the most extraordinary putting exhibition this side of Inbee Park. What did you do this week to have such great feel?

PAULA RETO: You know what? I lost my bags in Ireland and I didn't get my bag back for a whole week, so I was home and I was trying to practice, so I actually brought out an older putter that I had. This putter is a little bit more upright so my eyes are a bit more over the ball, and I did a couple changes where my eyes are a bit more over the ball.

I think that just makes a difference. I was able to see my lines a bit better because my eyesight was a bit off. Yeah, that forced me to use that putter, which I'm really happy I did. Maybe there is a reason for the lost bags. (Smiling.)

Q. Maybe just tell me, after nine years on tour, did you ever lose sight of the possibility that maybe one day I'll have my first title? And tell us what it means to finally have it.

PAULA RETO: You know what? I'm really competitive and I love the game. I just always knew that I wanted to stay in it. For a minute there, probably end of 2018, going through some stuff I was like, maybe this isn't it.

Then I did find a good coach and we just sort of like really honed in on certain aspects of my game and sort of came together a little bit.

And then too bad for COVID, but then already I saw some good improvements in 2021, which I was really happy about. It sort of got me all excited again and able to keep going.

I just never gave up and just I'm really thankful for my team I have at home that always push me to do good and do

better, and I'm really excited I did stay in it.

Q. This is an easy one. You mentioned your coach, what's his or her name?

PAULA RETO: Peter Krause, swing coach, yeah.

Q. I was watching you as you were coming up to 18 and you had that one shot that was a bit off to the right. Curious, what was going through your mind when you saw the huge crowds and you kind of knew you were on the cusp of winning this?

PAULA RETO: Yeah, it looked really nice having everybody like that and like this is the one hole. So it was really cool to see just everybody there.

But like I was trying to focus on my 3-wood shot, and I haven't been hitting it very good, so I did sort of flare it out right. I told myself, just get it on the green, you know, have a putt at it, look at it. I was just really trying to calm myself, but really enjoying the moment and everybody being able to come out and enjoy golf as much as we do, which is nice to see.

Q. You're bio mentioned that your dad is your biggest influence. Have you been able to talk to anybody back home yet?

PAULA RETO: No, not yet. They're all in Florida, so he did call me this morning. He goes, hey, just go, relax, have fun. He knows how sometimes I'll get. I'll get pretty quick too under pressure. He's always making sure I try to back it up a little bit.

But I'm excited to talk to them after.

Q. There was a lot made this week of Lucy Lin who's 12 years old. You didn't start golf until you were 15 or 16. Does your win make a statement about being able to be a late bloomer and doesn't always have to get younger?

PAULA RETO: Yes, 100%. You know, I remember I think I was 15 or 16 -- yeah, maybe in between there. I went to go watch the girls play at International course in Florida. It was like that million dollar shootout. I think Julieta Granada won, and I haven't played golf. My dad just took me to watch and I was like, that's what I want to be.

Well, we need to start putting in some work then. You have a couple years. But you can start at any age depending on how you putt your mind to it and how hard you work. Sometimes it's not always about working hard but doing the right things, too.

And then I went to a great university that taught me a lot more of my mental game and that kind of thing, which I didn't do much when I first started.

So all of these things add up. If you get in the right direction early on, I think you can do it.

THE MODERATOR: If I remember correctly, were you on the Purdue team that won with Maude-Aimee?

PAULA RETO: Correct, yes.

Q. South Africa has such a great legacy of tremendous golfers. Any heroes that you had? I don't know, I know this is a long way back, Sally Little was a champion of this tournament.

PAULA RETO: Yes.

Q. Any male or female heroes from your early days?

PAULA RETO: Yes, definitely Sally Little. She's so nice and such an inspiration for women's golf. She's doing quite a bit in South Africa.

But always all the big names. Gary Player, he was our coach when we did the Olympic Games in Rio, a couple of the young guys that I met along the way.

But, yeah, I mean, it's exciting and I'm glad I can follow in their footsteps.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Well congratulations. Enjoy every minute of it, and we'll see you here at Shaughnessy next year.

PAULA RETO: Yes. (Applause.)

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