

NW Arkansas Championship

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Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Maria Fassi

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome to the media center at the 2023 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship with local favorite and former Razorback, Maria Fassi.

Maria, welcome to Arkansas. So this is your seventh time playing in this season. What's so special about this community and this event to you?

MARIA FASSI: Well, now this is home for me for a couple years now, so just getting to sleep in my own bed is always awesome.

Of course just the support that we get from the community, the support we get from all the amazing brands that are behind this tournament, all the things that I have to do or get to do off the golf course are also very special to me.

It's just a great week. I'm always looking forward to it. Yeah, just excited to get it started tomorrow.

Q. And speaking of exciting brands behind the tournament, of course just announced that you're partnering with P&G. How excited are you for that partnership?

MARIA FASSI: It's great. I mean, what they've done with not only this event, with the Kroger tournament in Cincinnati and the support they have for women's golf that they've had for such a long time, it's amazing.

I'm privileged to represent their brand and what they stand for, and it's great. I mean, they're an amazing company. Of course they're globally known. The fact that they chose me to represent them is very humbling and a great responsibility as well that I'm excited to take on.

Q. Awesome news to hear. Former Razorback; one of five in the field this week. What has it been like? Can you speak to the transition you had from college to professional golf, and any advice you've been able to give the Razorback players now?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think the fact that we always have



one of the girls compete and get to see what professional golf is like, at least for one week, and get to play practice rounds with former Razorbacks or just amazing professionals we have on LPGA is such a blessing.

For me, it was very eye opening when I did play when I was in school just to see how different maybe some of the things were to college golf or to what I thought professional golf was.

So it's so great to see that that's a tradition we are keeping alive and giving girls an opportunity to play their way in in the qualifiers as well.

So I feel like it's just such a great way to continue to pave the way for them as well and lead by example and to be there for questions, advice, to lead the way and to show them that it's hard but it's doable, and that we're here and they can always count on us.

Q. Another involvement in the community this week with Fassi's Friends clinic later today. Yesterday too as well. Can you speak to that organization and what the goal is behind it?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, the foundation of course is a lot of -- you guys know it's just very personal to me. I'm extremely committed to growing the game and doing it through kids and kids of all abilities, social backgrounds.

Yeah, I think we're expecting over 150 kids today to show up for the clinic and, maybe more that just kind of heard about it and are going to come. Just to see them smile and see them interact with each other and learn from each other and just be respectful of each other and know that, you know, maybe one or the other needs a little bit more help or one of the kids enjoys one thing or the other a little bit more.

And just seeing them interact and be kids and be just genuine and ask questions and just be curious, you know, why somebody is one way or why somebody looks at it a different way. There will be no judgment there. It's just extremely inspiring. I think we're touching a lot of people's lives, and I'm excited to keep growing it and reach as many people as we can.

Q. You mentioned being committed to kids of all



backgrounds. What kind of put that into your heart? Have you always had that?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I mean, I think growing up I've always been extremely passionate of equality and representation and just making sure that people are seen and heard. And then just something that struck a little bit harder with me is just my cousin who is my age, we grew up together and has special needs, has mental and physical disabilities.

So since I was a kid I was able to experience life through her eyes in a way as well and see that maybe not everybody is as kind as they should be and everything comes as easy to her as to me luckily.

So just kind of I guess what I'm trying to do is growing that soft spot in kids' hearts. Honestly adults as well, but starting with kids obviously. Yeah, just making them understand that we can all be different, we think and look differently, but we can still respect and love each other.

Q. What's been good about your game lately and what are you working on?

MARIA FASSI: I mean, I think there is always a lot of positives in the way I've been playing. I think that the last few weeks have been a little bit better with a couple mishaps and things that could have or should have gone better.

I think I'm starting to get more consistent and just kind of have greater belief in my ability and what I'm capable of. We did a big change in the people around me, and I think that I'm seeing a lot of positive things come from that.

Working with a new coach and kind of tidying a few things here and there. It's been exciting. I'm just looking forward to be able to compete and finish the year with a strong note.

Q. Who is the new coach?

MARIA FASSI: Boyd Summerhays.

Q. You touched a little bit on obviously living in the area. I talked to Coach Taylor yesterday and she said you kind of call this a Razorback reunion just because of how many of you guys are able to compete in this tournament, and now Miriam competing in her senior year. What's it like to come out and share the course with all these former Razorbacks?

MARIA FASSI: It's awesome. I think for me, especially since this is home, I get to see the girls a lot. I've known

Miriam before she came to school, so, I mean, we have a good relationship. I just try to always be available for them. I don't really ever want to be in their face and be like, oh, I know better because I'm on the LPGA or I'm older than you or whatnot.

I try to make myself available, whether it's when we practice at Blessings or on a week like this. Just a word of advice or just cheering her on. She earned her way here, and I think that's the number one thing that she has to remember.

Same goes with Brooke. She's a sponsor's exemption, but they only give three of those and she earned it. I think she's an amazing player and person. Of course Stacy, Gaby, and myself, we may have of settled in a little bit more.

Still we all have earned our spots here. It's great we get to represent Razorback Nation everywhere we go, but more so when we are home.

Q. What advice have you been able to give Miriam or even Brooke, like you said, ahead of a tournament like this?

MARIA FASSI: Mainly for Miriam, she's in her senior year. There is definitely thought of what's going to come next, and I think there is a lot of learning, whether she makes or misses the cut that she can take from this week and use it moving forward whether she decides to turn professional or go a different route.

I think for her it's just more about enjoying the moment and kind of taking all the little wins that she's going to have throughout the week and use them to really finish strong with college this season.

The team plays next week so she's going to have a pretty busy next few days, you know, just defending at our home, and they play at Blessings and she has to show up for that.

She's one of the leaders on the team and it's a big responsibility. The way I see it and what I've told her, it's an honor to have that responsibility. It's something that she doesn't need to take lightly, but it's such a cool thing to be able to have.

And she has it. So just have her enjoy the week, have her enjoy the walk, the fans calling her name and asking for photos and signatures. All these things we work for every day. I think it's going to be a treat.

And same goes for Brooke. She's been playing so good. She's been working so hard. I think this is a week that

maybe could change the course of her year.

So I think for her it's just kind of try to forget about that maybe a little bit and just take the week as she would any other week and have fun and enjoy it.

She is even more of a local, so it's just a cool thing. She's going to have her family and friends and just amazing fan base out here, so I think all five of us have that on top of everybody else, which is amazing.

Q. Gaby was in here talking about just trying to commit to every shot no matter what. Is that what you mean by more belief in your game?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think there is always belief or lack of belief when it comes to maybe not seeing the results that you think you should be getting. I think we all work so hard, and then maybe the results don't show it so you start losing some of that belief or faith that the route you're on is the path to go.

I think for sure -- I mean, committing to every shot is crucial, but to me it goes deeper than that. It's just looking at yourself in the mirror every morning and knowing that you own this, you got this. It doesn't matter if it didn't show up yesterday; it can still show up today and be one the best rounds of your life.

For me, it's just kind of not forgetting the player that got you here today is plenty good and it's good enough. You just kind of have to remember that regardless of results you're still an amazing person, hard worker, and I think if you stay with the positive mindset, things are going to start falling your way.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we should be all wrapped up here. Thank you so much for your time. Appreciate it.

MARIA FASSI: Thank you.

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