

The Annika driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

Thursday, November 9, 2023

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Gaby Lopez

Quick Quotes

Q. We are joined now by Gaby Lopez. Gaby, 65 here in your opening round at the Pelican Golf Club. Just take us through your first round here.

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it was very solid. Round off the tee my iron play has been very solid the last few weeks.

I think it's a golf course that demands a lot of good second shots into the greens. There is some tough pin positions and there is some slippery like front edges of the greens, so just got to be very strategic.

So, yeah, I'm really happy with the way we positioned ourselves. I rolled it good on the greens, so, yeah, just happy overall.

Q. And that's something we've heard, this is very much a second-shot golf course. Is that something you'll take into consideration as you head into tomorrow and hopefully the weekend?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I feel very comfortable here. Last year, same. I feel it just demands a lot of precision. It's wide off the tee, but you still got to be very, very picky when you get into hitting your second shot.

Today we didn't have much wind. Probably blew a little bit in the morning and then shut down.

But, yeah, I'm really looking forward. Florida just offers great golf courses and I'm really happy just to be back.

Q. To end birdie, birdie, how much of a momentum boost do you think that will be heading into tomorrow?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, tons. You know, I've been hitting really good putts and they just didn't end up going in. Hit it really close on 16; didn't make it.

Just kind of patience overall kind of paid off.



Q. An Annika alum. How great is it to be at now a namesake LPGA Tour event for her?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I think we been waiting for this moment for a long time. She's done an amazing job, just doing amazing stuff for Latin America, for just Europe, for the U.S.

She's done an amazing job, so I'm really happy to contribute to that program that helped me do my college golfing career.

I'm really, really happy that she's open to also players and just the LPGA.

Q. It's been kind of, I don't want to say a challenging year, but up and down year for you. Slow start, peaked, slow start, and going back on the up.

GABY LOPEZ: Yep.

Q. How have you stayed patient?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it's really tough, especially because as athletes want to peak all year long. That's something unrealistic. You just got to be resilient when you're going down into those valleys because they're not going to last forever.

Yeah, I switched coaches at the beginning of the year and I realized that it was not my best decision, so I went back to my old coach, and that helped me get momentum going into the second half of the year.

I feel I'm a completely different player from there on. Yeah, I'm really thankful that my caddie has stayed patient as well with me because it's a team effort.

Yeah, I think just overall, we kind of have been having good chats about like our routines and processes and not skipping one number.

That's pretty much what we're in control of.

Q. Finished tenth in Malaysia; got off to a good start



here. Looks like you're going back on an up. How important is that with three rounds left here at such a big event with such a big purse but also next week as well?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it's huge. I told my caddie yesterday, we were practicing, I told him, I don't want the season to finish. I was like, can we just keep going?

He said to me, we're going to be back in a blink of an eye. Be patient.

Yeah, it's really important to get some momentum and see that your hard work is paying off. Like I said, I'm just really happy to kind of be seeing those good shots and putts dropping in.

Q. Is it a little weird to see this golf course so receptive? I know obviously last year with all the rain, but in previous years it's been firm and fast. To have them be super receptive, how does that change your strategy out here?

GABY LOPEZ: It's receptive, but at the same time sleek, so the putts you got to be very, very attentive and pay lots of attention. You hit it a little hard and it's going away from you.

Yeah, I mean, they receive, but still they can lengthen the golf course. We've had some really good golf course holes with like 423 or like 430 par-4s, so that makes it a good challenge.

I think just being able to be accepting of your misses and just kind of have some good self-talk, that's helped me.

Q. Any birthday plans?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I'm going to have a dinner party with some of my sponsors and couple of friends on tour.

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