

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 18, 2024

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Gaby Lopez

Quick Quotes

Q. Gaby, back again at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions; former champion of this event. You had a pretty exciting off-season. Want to talk about what it was like preparing for this event and balancing a pretty big life moment?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, we got married December 16th and it was a 500-people party. It was a lot of stress, a lot of planning going on. I had a lot of help back home, so that was really fun, to be honest, to have so many people that love you and that you love all together. It's always very special.

My off-season was just more traveling. Yeah, we went Africa and Spain to see the gorillas, safaris. Egypt. I went to have some really good wine and jamon in Spain. It was a dream come true.

Q. Kind of centering back to this event, what's it like to be back at this season opener and competing here at Lake Nona?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, Lake Nona has been one of my favorite venues on tour. They have an amazing facility. The golf course is one of the top golf courses we play all year.

I love connecting with some of the celebrities and amateurs that I got to play in the past years. It's such a fun event. Very different, but it's a great warmup for the season.

Q. How long was that fantastic honeymoon?

GABY LOPEZ: That was three weeks. We closed it up in Punta Mita in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. That's where I started training. That's what I love to do. Every time we go back to Punta Mita to do just intense training, intense golf, and then just let it flow on the golf course.

Q. It's hard to, I would imagine, pick a highlight from that honeymoon. What was your favorite?



GABY LOPEZ: I'm going to say safari is just a different planet. Just see the behavior of the animals in the wild, the pure behaviors, I think that was spectacular. Highly recommend it to everybody just to get that trip under their belts.

Q. You got off to such a fast start today. Birdied six of the first eight. What was working really well?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, sometimes when you come with low expectations you kind of relax a little bit, and that's always -- for me the start of the year kind of comes to that.

But I also think that I've been hitting my irons -- for the last six months we had really good feelings, and, I don't know, I hit probably 17 greens today. Just giving lots of opportunities, and it comes to I think the mental preparation, just relaxing a little bit more than past years.

Yeah, just kind of see where it goes and see what happens.

Q. Was there highlight or two in the early birdie run?

GABY LOPEZ: I think I made a really good putt on probably 12. It was kind of downhill, very fast leak, and then the next hole, probably the hardest par-3 we have on 13, and hit it to four feet. Hit a perfect 7-iron into the green.

Just hitting it close, hitting it solid. Yeah, I think sometimes when get those spiderwebs out of your head from past seasons, we get to play so much golf and it's so many shots, routines, so much intensity, pressure, tension, that I think the time off, it's really important.

So we decided to just really go away from golf and just hit Africa for the first time.

Q. I know you studied stats pretty intensely. What did you learn when you did a deep dive from last year?

GABY LOPEZ: Looking at stats, I think half of the year from last year was very different from the end of the year. I was giving myself a really hard time. At the beginning of the year last year I changed coaches and I was very -- going very technique-wise, and towards the half of the year, towards the end, I really just went back to my old



coach and we went back to just kind of doing more feeling rather than positions.

I ended up being one of the top players with hitting greens in regulation, and that's something we been looking into. Hitting more greens and greens and greens and don't get tired and desperate when you're hitting so many greens. You have to be patient with putting because you're going to miss more putts. I think that's something we were looking and kind of working on.

So, yeah, I think that just giving as many opportunities as you can and just staying very patient.

Q. Who was the old coach and the new coach?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, my old coach still is still Horacio Morales. We been having a relationship for so long. Sometimes that gap that we spent apart, it was healthy. We reconnected in a really stronger way.

I'm really happy we're working again together.

Q. If I have it right, Mark Wayne would tell a story that he was paired with you early on in this event. Part of the reason they're here. Do you feel a special connection?

GABY LOPEZ: I do. I love Hilton Grand Vacations. They do such an amazing job organizing this event and providing the champions an opportunity to compete against champions, just rewarding them. Winning out here is really tough. It's getting more and more competitive. Very, very deep. The title sponsor and Mark have done an amazing job, and very grateful for them.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports