

Sanderson Farms Championship

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Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

Michael La Sasso

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Michael La Sasso into the interview room here at the Sanderson Farms Championship. Michael, it must be pretty exciting for you; you're making your sixth start on the PGA TOUR but your first here at the Sanderson Farms Championship in the state where you go to school. How excited are you to play this week?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, it's nice to drive down to a tournament in the car; I'll say that for sure.

This place has been great. I've had a lot of people come up and talk to me about this before the week even started so there's been a lot of support. It's nice playing in the hometown. There's a lot of people wearing Ole Miss gear, which is definitely nice to see familiar faces. It's been great so far.

Q. What have you learned in the previous five starts you've made on the PGA TOUR? I know you made the cut in the most recent one at the 3M Open. What have you learned that you can put into practice this week?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, golf is hard for sure. But yeah, kind of just being able to experience these weeks, they're definitely a little bit different than college golf. You get there four days in advance instead of getting there about two days. So kind of just learning there's a fine line between tiring yourself out and actually being prepared. So kind of just trying to take that more into work this week and see what the week brings for sure.

Q. You've got some former Rebels also in the field with you; I think there's three others. What do you think the atmosphere is going to be like this week for you and those guys?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: It's great. When I heard one of my teammates from last year actually got in, we were talking about it actually last week. He was up in Oxford and he was so pumped up to play. There's a bunch of Ole Miss



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guys in the field this week.

It's nice being around people that I see back at home. I've played a pro-am and I was with Braden earlier this morning, so kind of just seeing a familiar face is always nice.

Q. Has Braden been a mentor for you? You've known him a long time.

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, for sure. He's been welcoming to all the guys on the team for sure. Early, kind of late last year, I talked with him a bunch. So kind of having that older mentor and having the ability to actually reach out to a guy like that that's been in my shoes and knows how to handle it, I'm fortunate to have that for sure.

Q. You've had some success this summer on TOUR, but how are you treating this fall? You're No. 2 in PGA TOUR U. How are you staying present in college still but looking forward to earning some TOUR starts or Korn Ferry TOUR status next year?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, it's definitely exciting. Kind of coming back to school, it's nice being in a team environment again. Having guys on the team that are rooting for you, you're rooting for them, the camaraderie is really great down there, especially on the Ole Miss team for sure. Just being grateful for what I have, I think that's a big part of it.

I can't really ask for a much better team down there. Being able to play all those events this summer and kind of being on the road for the first time by myself, I definitely cherish being around the guys a lot, so kind of being able to really soak that all up this year knowing that I don't really have much time left, but being able to have that ability to kind of be in the room with somebody and just have a good time.

Q. You shot 63 at 3M in the third round. What do you remember about that round, and what sort of feelings did you have that might have been different from other rounds on the PGA TOUR?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, we were first off that day, so



... when all is said, we're done.®

it was kind of an early morning. You felt like you were just going to play a casual 18 with a buddy. We kind of flew around the golf course, and it was kind of early so the greens were great. It was easy just to get into your own rhythm. I think that was one of the big things is sometimes when you play out here it's easy to kind of get shaken up. I'm not used to such big crowds following, so just kind of being able to be comfortable out there, it made golf a lot easier.

It's nice knowing that I'm able to do it for sure and that it's not that far away. So kind of learning that about myself, it's definitely a confidence booster, and kind of being able to do that weeks later would be quite nice as well.

Q. You being from North Carolina, what is it about your time at Ole Miss and your short experience here this week that's led you to call Mississippi your hometown and refer to this as kind of playing at home?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, it's great. My parents are coming down this week, too, which kind of gives it more of a home feel for sure.

Ever since I went to school at Ole Miss, it's definitely a little bit of an adjustment. I went to school and lived really close to my parents, so kind of being the first time away from them is definitely different, but I think it's been great for me being able to mature, know that your mom is not going to fold your laundry for you, so kind of learning that you've got to take care of the other stuff off the golf course as well, and it's been great.

I'm so thankful to be there. Yeah, it's been a blast for sure.

Q. You won the NCAA individual title, which has a lot of rewards with it. One of them is getting in the Masters next year. What's the anticipation like? I'm sure you think about it every day, every minute, but what's it like knowing you're going to be in that event next year?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, I've been pretty lucky to get around a bunch of people that are members there, and all of them are so supportive and ask whenever I want to go play, so I'm definitely going to try and wear that out here once it opens up.

It's one of those things where those weeks fly by so quickly, so kind of being able to go down there early, especially around people, and just try and soak up that week as much as possible. It's kind of what I'm hoping to do.

Q. I read in your bio that you stepped on a sea urchin. You've got to tell us that story.

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, so we're fortunate every year to go play an event down in Cabo. We were staying at a very nice host house kind of by a golf course and they had just opened up a beach club. We had a couple guys going out to paddle board after one of our rounds and kind of was just walking on the beach and unfortunate enough to step on it, and that led for a roller coaster of a week for sure.

But yeah, it was one of those things where you know if you can battle through that, you can get through anything. In the moment it was a little rough, but kind of taking the emotion out of it and kind of going after it like the week after and realizing what I just did, it definitely kind of makes you realize it's a little bit bigger than golf. The world comes at you pretty quickly. Kind of being able to play through that and having people around that were supporting me through that time was great. It was definitely an experience.

Q. What was that pain level like on a scale of 1 to 10?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Oh, it was a 10. Probably 11 but I'll say 10. But I was fortunate enough to have somebody there who was able to take them out in a short amount of time.

Q. I just want to mention you're playing this week with two pretty accomplished international players and I wondered if you had met them, Takumi Kanaya from Japan and Antoine Rosner from France. Have you played with them, and what do you anticipate out there this week?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Yeah, I actually played with Antoine that Saturday at the 3M and we kind of flew by. I'm hoping he brings another good luck this week, but he was great.

I haven't played with Takumi, but I've heard great things about him. I've definitely seen him around restaurants, so kind of being able to be around them this week is pretty cool, and Antoine is great. I love playing with him.

Q. Takumi just won a week or two ago on the Japan Tour and he's an eight-time winner, won as an amateur, which brings me to you. Do you let yourself dream about winning this week?

MICHAEL LA SASSO: Oh, 100 percent. I think it's something that everybody wants to do. I think there's a lot of amateurs out there that are able at that do that now. You saw it with Nick Dunlap. Amateur golf is just getting



so good.

I definitely think it's possible. It would be quite nice to do it in the home state for sure.

But yeah, I think that golf is kind of expanding, and I definitely think it's a possibility.

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