

# U.S. Adaptive Open

Sunday, July 9, 2023

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 6)

## Cathy Walch

### Press Conference

CATHY WALCH: I'm once again honored to be able to participate in this incredible tournament.

#### **Q. Talk about your experience last year and how that helps you.**

CATHY WALCH: Yeah, last year to be honest with you I was kind of a deer in headlights. There was a lot to take in, not just the intensity of the tournament itself but with the media, and I was playing with Simon, too, for the first two days, so it was a little intense.

I think now, especially now that I feel like I know the course better and after experiencing that, I think I'm coming in a little bit more relaxed.

#### **Q. Can you describe your game a little bit and kind of how you think it fits the course.**

CATHY WALCH: Yeah. So I don't hit a very long ball, for obvious reasons. With that in mind, I really don't get into too much trouble. I'm pretty good at staying fairway or just a little off.

Where I have been working on is sharpening up my short game. Because I don't hit a very long ball, I need to get that short game down so I can bring the strokes down. Working on putting and chipping.

#### **Q. You're a two-time Georgia Adaptive Open champion. That field brings in players from all over the country, as well. How do you feel that has prepared you coming here with a strong field, as well?**

CATHY WALCH: Absolutely. That experience and the GSGA when they started that, their championship, really opened up my experience because most of my experience was really just with the Amputee Golf Association, and now I'm seeing players of all different types of varieties of adaptations.

It's really impressed me and really helped me to see that this world is growing, and I really feel like GSGA has done



a good job in paving the way for everybody.

#### **Q. When did you first learn about golf, and when did you first start playing?**

CATHY WALCH: I started playing in high school. A couple of times my parents would take us out on a little par-3, but I didn't really have a whole lot of interest, and both my parents were avid golfers.

My sister, who's a couple years older than I am, she was already on the high school team. My parents approached the golf coach and said, what do you think? Do you think she'd be okay trying this sport? She was all gung ho and ready to try.

I said, all right, I'll give it a try. I don't know, I'm not going to commit to it yet, but we'll see.

Got started, and I just fell in love with the game. After my first round of shooting a 70 for nine holes, you'd think I'd quit and throw them away, but no, I was absolutely thrilled with that, and I've been in love with the game ever since.

#### **Q. How would you describe your journey from that point to last year where you came here and you won your division?**

CATHY WALCH: Yeah, wow, it has been a long journey. I've been playing this game for 42 years. Some years when I was raising children and up to my elbows in diapers I didn't get to play quite as often but still always kept it in my life.

Now here, how my game and seeing how adaptive golf has evolved over those 42 years, I'm just blown away, and I just know we're going in the right direction, and we're going to be even bigger and better.

#### **Q. How would you describe how adaptive golf has evolved throughout your life?**

CATHY WALCH: Well, like I said before, when I started golf, only after about a year of playing, my coach had introduced me to NAGA, National Amputee Golf Association, and '81 was my first tournament. As far as I knew, that was the only organization out there that -- and then of course they're different divisions.



It wasn't until I moved here and actually Bob Buck from the Eastern Amputee Golf Association, when I told him I was moving to Georgia, he's the one who introduced me to Dave Windsor, and that really opened my eyes to seeing how much it's grown over the years. I kind of lost a little touch with it, and really still not quite sure how it boomed and the when it started booming, but in the last four years in my experience, I've just seen it grow so much.

**Q. What does golf mean to you?**

CATHY WALCH: It's a part of my identity. It's not all my identity, but it has given me an opportunity to feel good about myself and the accomplishments that I can do.

**Q. How do you feel going into this week? What do you have to do well on No. 6 out here to go back-to-back?**

CATHY WALCH: I'm psyched about it. I really am. I'm pumped. Like I said earlier, I'm a lot less apprehensive and nervous.

I've just got to focus on my own game, and I know that the competition is getting ramped up and I know it will with each year as we progress, so I've got to just focus on my own game and just play the best I can with what I've got.

**Q. A question about a championship like this. Where is the line between -- there's a lot of camaraderie, but there's also an intense competition. When you're out there with your fellow playing partners, you're obviously kind of all part of this amazing community, but you're also trying to win. Can you talk a little bit about that? Does it make it difficult to focus on the competition, or does the camaraderie help your competitive juices?**

CATHY WALCH: Actually so when I'm out there on the playing field, on the course, I have a different frame of mind. It's just me, and I try not to think about the other players, quite honestly, and I just try to focus on me and the course. I'm competing against the course.

Off the course, after we're done, I love to chat and visit and hear about other people's games and get to know them. That's a different part of the tournament. So I really look at the tournament as two parts. There's the competition part. That's when I'm on the course. Then when I'm off the course, it's time to meet people and just get to develop friendships and meet new people and see old friends.

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