

# Dana Open presented by Marathon

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

Sylvania, Ohio, USA

Highland Meadows Golf Club

## Azahara Munoz

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll get started here. First want to kick this off by welcoming back Azahara Munoz. Aza, welcome back to the LPGA Tour. What is it like for you to be back at an LPGA Tour event?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Thank you. It's been amazing to be back. I was a bit nervous coming to the course on Monday actually. Feels like it's been forever.

I've enjoyed being home so much. It's not that I was dying to be here, but now that I'm here it's really nice to see everyone, and obviously I've been practicing to compete, so it's nice to be out here again.

THE MODERATOR: You gave birth to your little one February 28th. We were just talking about it. What has the last year been like for you?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: It's been amazing. Everybody always says how you just don't know how much you love them until you have them, but he's incredible. He's such a good little boy. He has the best temperament, so he literally never cries. He's so easygoing.

So it's been super enjoyable. My parents were over here for three months with me so it was nice to just be home. We are always at such a fast pace traveling, so it's been really nice to have the little break and enjoy the baby.

THE MODERATOR: What was it like getting back into a competition mindset? When did you pick up a club again? Talk us through that journey.

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah, so I had to have an emergency C-section, which was never the plan. So you cannot do anything for six weeks, so they clear me after six weeks. To be honest, it was for the best. Knowing me, I probably would've tried to go back as soon as I could.

So I couldn't do anything, like no gym, nothing for six weeks. Was really nice. Just enjoy the baby, my parents.

After that, I always -- before that happened, I always thought when the baby is a six months that was kind of the plan. But I never pick a target. I thought, this is the only time I'm going to be smart. I always come back too early off injuries.

As early as I'm ever going to come if everything goes well was this week, which the baby is now exactly six months. It's worked hard out. I was feeling good. I started practicing probably after seven weeks, but not very much. I'm breast-feeding so I only got a little tiny bit of breaks, so I would go for an hour and back.

But probably two months ago I started practicing a bit more. Things were going well so I thought, you know, let's do the six-month plan. So here we are.

THE MODERATOR: That's incredible, just to come from an emergency C-section, something you did not plan for, to be able to be back here at an LPGA Tour event. Did you mentally have to think about what it was like to get to this point as well? I know physically you have to get back into competition mindset, but mentally and also juggling baby, family as well?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah. I never thought of anything. I just wanted to take it as it comes, because everybody has such a different story. To be honest, I didn't know how my body was going to be feeling. Then you think you're going to have a natural birth and then something else happens.

So I never really had a plan. I just thought, have the whole year; I'll take it how it comes. Hopefully I'm back to feeling normal. But everybody has such a different story that I didn't want to have any story in my mind, just because. Some people say my baby cries all the time, my baby never cries. Like everybody is so different, so I never had a plan.

I just wanted to see. I think I did pretty good. During pregnancy I worked out and I was lucky enough that I was feeling good and I worked out until literally the day I had him. I texted my coach and was like, I don't feel too hot today. She was like, don't come. That was the only day I

missed. I was still working out three times a week and kept active, so I think that really helped me after the six weeks.

I got back to it pretty quick; obviously slowly. But I felt good very fast. I lost the weight. I don't want to say anything because everybody is so different. But I was very lucky. My body went back to normal pretty quick. I've been feeling good, so...

THE MODERATOR: Couple years ago you talked about your battle with Hashimoto's Disease. As someone naive to that, for you, pregnancy, Hashimoto's Disease, to be back out here when that's in the picture as well, what's that been like for you as well, and was there anything during pregnancy as well?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah, it's so funny. Normally it gets so much worse during pregnancy. Even some people that don't have any thyroid problems start getting thyroid problems. For me it was the opposite. Our lives are so stressful. We're always traveling, hormones change. So I always have to juggle with that.

During pregnancy I feel like I was home doing nothing. I wasn't traveling, so actually my levels were the best they've ever been. It was the weirdest thing. The doctor couldn't believe it. After I had him, I've switched medications. It's one of my new sponsors, and it's been so good. I've gone lower in dosage, which has been great.

Obviously with all the hormones I still go every month and do blood work. I've had to tinker a couple times, but I've been feeling pretty good with it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

### **Q. Congratulations.**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Thank you.

### **Q. Who is with you this week? What's the circus like?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yes, so this year I'm only planning on playing four, so I'm going to need help for next year. This year Tim is here this week, and then next week my laws are coming. Arkansas Tim is coming, but he's taking holidays from work so he cannot come so much.

And then in Tampa I'm playing and I'm not sure who is coming. Someone has to be. It's literally impossible to travel with so much stuff.

### **Q. I can't imagine. What does your husband do in?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: He works for a bank. FineMark,

yeah.

### **Q. Okay. Which part of your game were you the most unsure about or you thought might take longer to come back?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Again, I just didn't want to have any expectation, so I've literally -- I've done everything without thinking anything. I didn't think what my baby was going to be like, I wasn't going to sleep, which is the only thing I was a bit worried about.

I didn't think about my game being different, but neither did I when I was pregnant. A lot of people said, oh, I lost so much distance. I just didn't want to think, because everybody is so different.

So I feel like sometimes you hear a story and then you almost make it become that way, so I didn't think of anything. To be honest, I touch wood obviously, this is a learning experience. I haven't competed in so long. Nothing feels weird.

Like, yeah, I was telling yesterday someone from Spain. I was like, I have no excuses. Obviously the competition and getting the baby ready, all of that is so different and maybe not sleeping as great, but other than that, my body feels good. I just need to play. Just get things going.

### **Q. Are you using daycare?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Using daycare. So Tim wasn't sure because I feel like he feels since he's here he should take care of the baby. I was like, they're lovely and I want the baby to be with other babies. He is such an easygoing baby. I knew he was going to be fine.

Yesterday was his first day and he had a great day. So far today apparently, too, so it's been nice. I think that's so good what the tour does for us. I want him to enjoy the other kids as well.

### **Q. So Paula is coming in here in a little bit. Have you talked to her about this experience very much?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah, she texted me a little bit because I had to do a sponsor day a month ago I think it was. She was texting me, what stroller are you traveling with? How do you do on the trip? It was pretty funny.

Only thing I need to juggle is I'm still breast-feeding, so we'll see how it goes. But other than that, yeah, I don't know. I think I'm going to be fine.

### **Q. When you're in the office now, do you find it harder**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**to concentrate since you're not used to being apart for very long?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yes.

**Q. Has that been an interesting adjustment?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: No. Actually, I'm pretty good. So when I'm at home I always have the phone on at all times. It can get annoying. I need to mute everyone. I have a baby-sitter now coming for four hours a day so I can run to practice for a little bit.

But, yeah, so my phone is always beeping and I'm checking it. It's kind of stressful. Now that I know he's there and my husband is here, I mute it and I think I'm pretty good.

Obviously I check my phone because they send pictures, but I think I'm going to be okay. Yesterday walking in I was a bit -- like you know when your heart is a bit tight, but as soon as I was there and they are so good, they grab the back and he's mine. He's good. I'm good.

If he would've cried or I'm sure if I drop him off tomorrow and he's crying, which I hope he doesn't, then that's probably worse. He was so content and this morning. He was all smiles.

I'm like, he doesn't miss me. Yeah.

**Q. Hashimoto's is not super fun.**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah.

**Q. Having that new medication, what struggles did you have as a player dealing with that thyroid disease?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Before I knew I had it?

**Q. Yeah.**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: So it feels like it was so long ago. I've always been so tired. To be honest, I'm still a bit tired, but now I also of a baby, so it's hard to know. I was always really tired. I start having quite a bit of anxiety but it didn't happen so much. I'm still quite calm. But every now and then like my heart would really go or like weird like that.

But I didn't really know until I started losing so much hair. Literally I have a bald spot like that. It's embarrassing so I was like, oh, my God I'm super anxious. I was thinking the traveling is really getting to me or maybe I think I'm not anxious.

I'm always kind of stressed because our lives is stressful, but it gets to the point that you think that's the normal. I'm like, maybe I'm really stressed and I think that's normal, because I don't know how other people feel.

So I went to the dermatologist thinking I have alopecia, and she knew right way. So I did blood work. After that, I still was on medication and the tiredness never went away, which is I think this new medication I'm on is really helping me with that.

Considering I have a six month old I'm feeling pretty good. The tiredness never went away. You're kind of achy, things like that. At least my hair grew back, which makes me feel good. Couple times it happened my eyelashes fell off.

But, yeah, I almost feel like you just get used to it. I don't push myself so much anymore, which is bad for golf, but it is what it is.

But, yeah, this new medication, to be honest, I've been -- considering again I have a newborn and all of that, I've been feeling quite good.

**Q. And just having to manage that now, how challenging is it to deal with something like that, a six month old, and coming back to professional golf?**

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah, it's a challenge. You know, I took it like -- at the beginning I almost took it bad, like why me type of thing. Then you start thinking it could be so much worse. It's still manageable. If I'm tired, take a nap or something.

It's not so bad, to be honest, like other people. I feel like I'm on the -- I don't know, I think I've managed it pretty good. I'm so consistent. Pretty much every month or two months I do blood work. I'm really on top of it. I take care of what I eat. I'm very strict because I know how bad you can feel.

Like at the bottom of it I remember we got a new puppy and I was so tired. Like I can't even walk the puppy. Then I start thinking, what's wrong with me. Why don't I want to do things. So it's never been that bad anymore, so now I'm feeling like pretty fantastic.

But, yeah, some days you are still pretty tired and achy, but I just take it. If it's one of those days and I'm playing I have to play. But I won't go to the gym or make sure I go to bed early and manage like that.

THE MODERATOR: You talked a little bit about dropping baby off on the day care, utilizing the Smuckers Child

Developmental Center. You've probably seen moms over the past couple years use it. Now to be an LPGA mom yourself and use that, you talked about how wonderful it is to have this service.

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: To live it and use it, what does it mean to you?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: It's everything. I think we all feel so grateful that they're here. I think kids should be social and things like that. Even Tim is here, I still want my baby to do that. Those ladies know better than us. They been taking care of babies for, I don't know, 30 years. Obviously Sarah Jane Smith is my best friend out here and she has a three year old, Theo.

Not that I was worried, I'm pretty calm, but she made me feel so good about it. As soon as I got there the ladies made me feel so amazing. It's so good and they really help us out. Bardene was telling me last week Stacy was playing really early so they wouldn't wake the baby up. She just walk over and stay in the room with her. They just really help us out. It's amazing.

THE MODERATOR: And off the course, a little bit of a 180 here, but another famous mom is retiring this week at the U.S. Open, Serena Williams.

AZAHARA MUNOZ: That's right.

THE MODERATOR: As an athlete and LPGA mom yourself, what does it mean to see her have her shining moment this week at the U.S. Open?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yeah, I love tennis. It's my favorite sport. What Serena has done, it's incredible. She's the all-time GOAT. Obviously the last few years I'm sure it's been more challenging for her with a baby, especially in such a physical sport. But she's done so amazing. I did see a quote that she did: I'm going to from good mom to great mom.

It kind of hurts because it's true. The other day traveling I'm like, Oh, God, I'm putting my baby through so much. You know, it also has the positives. There are things that my baby is going to experience other babies never going to experience. I really want to travel at least for a few years with him and see how it is.

I know I want to play, but I also know I want him with me. We'll see how it goes. The circus has started, so...

THE MODERATOR: Follow up. Tennis, your favorite

sport. Will you be watching Serena?

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Yes. I watched the first match so I will be watching for sure, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Aza, and best of luck this week.

AZAHARA MUNOZ: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

