

The Ascendant LPGA benefiting Volunteers of America

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The Colony, Texas, USA

Golf Clubs at The Tribute

Gaby Lopez

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Gaby Lopez pre-tournament before the The Ascendant LPGA Benefiting Volunteers of America.

Gaby, I know it's been a few weeks since your first win this season. Just tell me, it's been two weeks. You got to go home to Arkansas, home away from home to Arkansas. Just tell me how all these emotions and everything have been for you since then.

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it's been crazy. Going back to Arkansas, it's just always fun. I have lots of friends. I have a great time to spend with family and just get to meet new people. So it's always refreshing.

It's one of the stops that everyone likes on tour, but I'm super happy and excited to be back to Texas. I have family here as well. My aunt lives about 35 minutes away. Whole family gets to come to this event from Mexico. It's super close, so I'm really excited.

Q. Having just won a couple weeks before you went out to Arkansas, did do anything to celebrate? How excited were your friends in in Arkansas for you?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it was a little busy of course, P&G and that week for me in Arkansas. It's always fun. Always a little bit busy.

But, yeah, I just celebrate with my coach after. My boyfriend got to come through the week. So it's been fun. I've been tired but excited to continue the momentum.

Q. Speaking of which, just how does it feel to have a few weeks out of your win? How does it feel to continue to keep playing. How do you keep that momentum?

GABY LOPEZ: Right, I think it's really -- it has been a lot of like calmness and tranquility after this win. We always are



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looking for the next win, for the next trophy, and, yeah, just being able to take that monkey off my back and just embracing that, it was just a matter of connecting the dots.

If you get everything in the right place, your driving, irons, putting, wedging, if you just get everything in order, it's just a matter of flowing and connecting the dots for four rounds.

It's a long time. I think we don't realize how much golf we play during a week, how much it takes to win on the LPGA. It's just getting harder and harder. Players are getting more accurate, longer, and it's just a really excited to be right now playing golf.

Q. I know you've been on the tour for a couple seasons. How is that? Is it exciting for you to see the competition getting stiffer? How much do you enjoy that?

GABY LOPEZ: I love it. Being able to compete week in and week out against the best in the world is the biggest treat. The tougher it is the better you got to get, the better you just got to be emotionally, mentally as well.

I think that I've taken a lot of insights from my first season up to this one, and being able to approach the game in a different mental way has been key to be more relaxed, be able to enjoy things outside of golf and not to overthink what's going on in the golf course.

Q. I want to pivot to this week. Last year I know you had a third-place finish. Take us back to last year. What made you successful? What was the key?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, we birdied 17 which got us a shot from the lead coming into the last hole. I had bit of an unlucky bounce into the last, so I found myself in the bunker and I had to chip out. I made a bogey.

But it's just a fun week. I feel that it demands a lot off the tee and into the greens. It gets firm. The greens are fast. Sometimes we play with a lot of wind and skinny greens.

I feel that is a great challenge. It's not a chip and putt contest. You got to be very accurate with your iron shots. I don't know, I feel that kind of benefits my game.

Q. You say that you have come out to Texas a lot to

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see your family. Have you played here at all on your off time, not just in this tournament?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I get to play a couple rounds here at Old American Golf Club. I really enjoy how the course is set up. You just got to be very creative.

Texas is a great place to play competitive golf. You see a lot of PGA Tour and LPGA players living here year-round, so I just feel like it's a great place to just have all the golf fans and enjoy some of the professional golf.

Q. Yeah. There is a lot Texas success at this tournament. Why do you think that is? What is it about this golf course that makes it suit Texans specifically?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I think around the greens is tough to chip. Sometimes you just got to putt it. You have the Texas wedge, which is a putter. You got to be creative with hybrids. Sometimes when it's uphill into the grain and you're short sided, you just got to take your pill and try to hit the zone instead trying to be specific and get too picky.

It's just really fun. I think to me it kind of feels like this kind of link-ish golf course where you have to be creative around the greens as well.

But you just got to be very smart into the greens and not get too greedy with wedge shots. You can make a mistake.

Q. The wind, too, out here I think is going to be a particular challenge. How do you manage that?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, you got to be very aware where the wind is coming and just got to pick a good spot off the tee. Sometimes playing with a tee box, it's a good idea playing the right or the left side of the tee box. That gives you a different angle into the wind. I like to do that a lot.

And also on par-3s if you just keep the ball -- sometimes if you don't tee it and put it on the ground, that takes a lot of the sideways, especially coming into side winds.

So, yeah, I'm really excited. You got to commit to every shot because it can get really tough out there.

Q. So tomorrow I don't know if you know this, but I know this, Golf Channel featured group. I think last week you were in ESPN's future group, too. How much do you like being in the spotlight or seeing all this coverage of yourself and other golfers out there?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, it's been very interesting. I love it

that ESPN+ and all these different media streaming platforms are joining into the LPGA.

I feel that's a great time to show not only a couple players but more players, and especially from Mexico. Mexico doesn't really get to -- they don't play a lot of the LPGA on TV, so having all my friends to just join into ESPN+, it's just really fun that they get to watch me every single shot.

That's pretty much what any spectator or fan wants, to be able to watch their country's player for every single shot. So it's really exciting to see like my grandma can get in and enjoy those kind of rounds.

So I'm really excited that we have this partnership, and hopefully we can keep it going.

Q. Going into the last half of this season, obviously I feel like a goal -- if I ask you what your goal is, it's going to be, I want to win again. What are some of those micro goals and how you manage your expectations going into the last couple tournaments?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I try to break it more into little goals in my process. So if I get to hit 15 greens average, that will be spectacular. I feel that more greens I hit of course the more birdie opportunities I have.

I've always felt comfortable with my putter. That's one of my strengths. So just give myself as many birdie chances. Of course I would like to be in contention again. My coach back home actually was watching me play a couple of tournaments in the summer and he said, you're playing so good. You're going to have at least two chances to win this year. We took advantage of one.

I'm hoping that the next kind of chance comes soon enough to close the year.

Q. Did he give you any golfing advice back in Arkansas, or was it mostly just congratulations? What did he tell you to do moving forward?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, this was my instructor, my swing coach. But my coach in Arkansas as well, she just kind of created this belief in me since I was in college and that kept on going. Sometimes I call her to kind of refresh my memory on that.

Q. Last question, Stacy Lewis, your teammate, your friend. She's won this tournament before. Have you guys ever talked about it or played together out here?

GABY LOPEZ: I haven't had the opportunity to play with her. Yeah, she's really smart. She knows exactly what



she has in the bag and what she hasn't. She just plays to her strength, and that's something I admire.

She doesn't get into the mind trick that she has to hit a certain shot. She knows what she can do and takes a lot of humbleness and a lot of just self-reflection to see, okay, I'm better at this shot than others.

So, yeah, it's a lot to learn from her and I admire her a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Last question: What is the best part of your game right now for you that you really want to utilize this week on this course?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, like I said, iron shots. I've been pretty accurate with them. Got to probably work a little more on my tee shots. Last week I only hit three drives off the tee, so kind of get that feeling of the driver. It was kind of hard for me sometimes.

But, yeah, I'm really excited that we can get a lot of drivers out here and it's just really fun. It's really fun to play in the wind and really fun to see different lines because sometimes you can cut off a line. I think it's 13 that you can cut off the par-5, so using length to my strength and, yeah, probably accuracy with my iron shots.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Well good luck. I hope you have fun.

GABY LOPEZ: Thank you guys.

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