

Dow Championship

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Midland, Michigan, USA

Midland Country Club

Stacy Lewis

Maria Fassi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: I'm in the media center here at the Dow Championship joined by Stacy Lewis and Maria Fassi, team Tex-Mex this week. Talk about how excited you are to be back at the Dow Championship and maybe a little bit of the reason why you chose that name again and the song that you're going to be using this week.

STACY LEWIS: I really look forward to this week, really over the last three or four years that we've been able to play together. It's a nice break, especially coming off of a major, of the grind. This golf course, you can go make a ton of birdies. Just the format is so fun. To be able to play with Maria, we've made a run at this thing, so looking forward to making another run at it.

MARIA FASSI: For me, it's been an honor to be able to be paired with Stacy for the last few years. It's such a learning week for me. I think I've seen a lot of growth from the first year that we played to today.

Because she's sitting next to me, I always say I think she's one of the smartest players on Tour, and to get to be her teammate and to get to pick her brain, it's a privilege. It's so much fun.

I think it's been cool to see even just like Chesnee grow through the years, and now she's been in charge of picking our team song. We've got "Are you ready for it" this year. We'll see if everybody else is ready for us, too.

Q. Just talk a little bit more about the golf, how you feel with the two different formats we have this week, how you'll complement each other's games out there.

STACY LEWIS: I think this golf course really, it's best for partners that you have a long hitter and maybe an average or shorter hitter. You can really take advantage of some shorter par-4s. There's some bunkers that she can carry that aren't in play off of certain tees.

Just the way the odds and evens kind of work out, it works

out really well, I think, for that setup, and it's shown, I think, the last few years. Then alternate shot, alternate shot is just hard. I think we work really well together, and again, her length helps me out on certain holes, and then I can contribute with the wedges and the putter and things like that.

I don't know what it is. I just think we've complemented each other's games really well on this golf course.

MARIA FASSI: I think for me, she's always just given me that extra confident, even in alternate shot. Like if I want to be aggressive, she's like, if you're feeling it, go for it, so I know that if we end up in a not ideal spot, she'll figure it out. It's the same for her. Like if she doesn't hit a great shot, we'll try to find a way to make it happen.

I feel like we both just almost play our game and trust each other that we've got each other's back. It's a super fun golf course. We enjoy coming back. It's always just fun to be aggressive, to have to be smart at times.

It's just a lot of fun.

Q. Talk a little bit about how special this event is. One of the few team events we have on Tour. The local community, so many fans and the support from Dow, especially Maria being a Dow sponsor and ambassador. If you both could talk a little bit about that.

MARIA FASSI: For me, it's an honor, again, to represent Dow week in and week out, but more so when we get to come to Midland and I get to meet a lot of the people that work for the company. I get to meet a lot of the people that make things easier behind the scenes for me, as well. It's always great to put faces to names and just get to build great relationships with all of them.

It's like you said, just to see the way the community gets involved and this tournament keeps growing every year and just walking around downtown and everybody knows who we are, they're just super excited to have us here, it's a great feeling to feel like you're welcome and wanted where we go. This is definitely a very special week.



STACY LEWIS: Yeah, you can see the impact this tournament has made on this community, and the amount of money that's donated by Dow. I'm sure they donate quite a bit beyond this golf course, but you see it in the crowds. You see it in the people that come out. You see it in the builds around the golf course that continue to grow to handle the number of fans that are coming.

Then the commitment to us and the Tour and increasing the purse, this event is different, and I think we need something like this. I think you get to see players' personalities. You get to see people have a little bit more fun on the golf course than we normally do, and it's not such a grind week.

We're extremely thankful for Dow and all that they're doing for us. Look forward to this going on for a lot more years.

Q. Stacy, if you can put on your Solheim cap and veteran status cap, I'm doing a profile on Rose Zhang. Through the years of you seeing young players come up and your choice of her for the team last year as a rookie, what do you see in Rose's game and what makes her such a success so early in her career?

STACY LEWIS: Well, she made the team on her own last year. I didn't even have to pick her after that win.

She's in an advantageous spot right now with the Rolex Rankings in that she hasn't met the minimum yet, so basically any tournament she plays in improves her ranking, so that has -- while she's a great player, that has helped her ranking out tremendously over the last year, year and a half you could say.

But she's extremely talented. I think you look at her amateur golf record, I mean, in the last 10 or 15 years, I don't think there's anybody who's done what Rose has done in amateur golf.

When you do that, you get tons of experience in professional events, and that's what shows up at the win at Mizuho, at making Solheim Cup. That's because of all the professional events she's already played in.

It is funny, though, that week of Mizuho, I saw her early in the week, and I asked her how she was doing, and she goes, man, this professional golf thing is hard. I don't think she's really settled into being a professional golfer yet. She's just now getting to the point where she's playing golf courses twice, where she's learned the golf course -- she's felt like a rookie for a really long time. I don't think we've even seen the best of Rose's golf yet.

Q. Do you think she's ready for the whole Olympic experience, considering she's been through Solheim and the NAAs and Augusta and all that stuff?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, I didn't expect her to play extremely well at Solheim just because it was a totally new experience. Running off of the high of NAAs straight into Mizuho and then her life just got crazy. I really didn't expect a whole lot out of her at Solheim, so I think she's going to be a lot more ready for this Olympics. She's tailored her schedule a little bit more for it to be a little bit more prepared. She's a great player. I expect her to go have a good week.

Q. Maria, Olympics, the top 60 were just released and your name being one of them. Talk about how excited you are considering your past experience in 2020 and what you're looking forward to most.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I mean, anytime that I've gotten the opportunity to represent Mexico, it means the world to me. To do it at the Olympics for a second time, it's just crazy to say out loud. I don't think in my wildest dreams I ever thought I could be an Olympian, let alone do it twice.

I think for this time around, of course with COVID being the main character in the last Olympics, just having my family there, I feel like that's just going to be an amazing week for all of us to share together.

Also the athlete in me is super excited to go and try to see other people perform and compete and meet the best athletes in the world and get to have more of that, like, Olympic Village experience and just enjoy it.

It's such a privilege to be an Olympian, and I'm just beyond excited to get to represent Mexico again.

Q. Stacy, on a Solheim follow, you and Suzann are both here this week. With this being a team event and the format, you're here to play with Maria and win, but also in the back of your mind is it Solheim Cup just seeing how the other participants do during the week?

STACY LEWIS: Oh, yeah, for sure. I didn't want to make it a requirement for my players to play here. I just told them, if you play, it's great, but if not, I want you to do whatever is going to help you play the best at majors. We had several not play this week, which is totally fine, but then I have a couple potential pairings that -- a couple they came to me about, like Ally and Jennifer Kupcho are playing together, which I'm really interested to see how that one goes because that could be a really good one for us. Then Ryann O'Toole and Lucy Li are playing together, which is kind of a little bit of an oddball pairing, kind of one

you wouldn't expect. But the same as us, kind of a longer hitter with a little bit more of an average hitter, I think they could actually do really well on this golf course. Kind of interested to see how they do, too.

Yeah, just seeing all of them, how they play team golf, how they interact with their partners, it tells you a lot about who they are and if they're not playing with another American, what type of players they could potentially play with. So yes, I'm watching.

Q. This week because of where we are in Midland, the community comes out for this event, the entire city comes out. Because it's a team event, does it almost have a mini-Solheim Cup feel this week with the number of fans that are out here this week cheering you on?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah. When I think of this event, I think of 18, and when you're in those last couple groups coming around 18, it is a pretty nerve-racking shot. There's so many people around this green.

I think having the DJ and the music, it does have that Solheim Cup feel. It does have -- where everybody is just a little bit looser and you've got to go make a bunch of birdies.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, agreed.

Q. Maria, just talk a little bit about how you might have a guest out with you tomorrow. Talk about that and what that means to you.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, with Fassi's Friends, my foundation, we've been bringing one of our kids to kind of have a behind-the-scenes experience and get to be our shadow, basically, for the whole week. We've brought three girls so far, all from our chapter in Arkansas, but this year we wanted to give back, I guess, a little bit to this community and get somebody from around here to get to experience what we do this week.

So we have a girl, Annalin, she's 8, and she lives about an hour away, just a complete golf nut. Yeah, she'll get to do as much or as little as she wants with us.

We've had a lot of the girls just want to be on the golf course all day with us, and we've done that. Last year the girls went to the pool a few times and enjoyed milkshakes and relaxing, as well.

It's kind of up to them how much or how little they want to do. But it's such a great opportunity for them to see how life on Tour is.

The girl we brought the first year, she told me when we dropped her off at the airport, I want to be a professional golfer one day, and you're going to be my partner when we play Dow, and I'm like, man, I've got to stay in shape for a long time.

But it's those little things that I think keep me wanting to grow the foundation and impact young girls and young people to chase after their dreams. Stacy has been a great role model for them, as well, and all the players, they are extremely nice, signing stuff, gifting them things, and just making them feel very big and special.

Dow has been a great partner with me to be able to do that. They help me with some of the costs and of course giving me access to everything that we might need. We couldn't do it without them.

Q. This clearly seems like a passion area for you. Stacy, what is it like to see Maria glow when she talks about this and the work she's done, as well?

STACY LEWIS: Yeah, it's important that golf doesn't become your life, and that's what you're seeing with her is that when golf becomes your life, you don't play very good golf. We've talked about this. So it's finding things that you're passionate about outside of hitting that golf ball around the course.

I wish every golfer out here did that or did something, whether -- however they want to give back. I think finding things you're passionate about and making sure Maria is not just known as Maria Fassi the golfer. That's a really important thing at the end of the day.

Q. Willis debuted on Instagram. Talk a little bit about Willis being out on Tour and now the social media coverage he is getting.

STACY LEWIS: Everybody says hi to Willis before they say hi to Maria.

MARIA FASSI: For sure. If they don't see him, they're like, "where's Willis?"

Yeah, he's such a good boy. He's everybody's friend. Every player, every person that walks by, he's always giving them all the love and getting all the love from them, as well. He's good.

But yeah, we created an Instagram for him, and it's just funny, "where's Willis," and it's just silly pictures of life through his eyes. It's funny, all the girls on Tour were like, finally we can get to enjoy more of those pictures, as well.

He doesn't follow anybody, so whoever gets that first follow, yeah, it's going to be very special.

But yeah, all the players, he's like, okay, why did so and so make that Instagram post and I didn't. I'm like, I don't know. You've just got to keep trying.

Yeah, but he's such a good dog, and I think it brings a lot of joy of course to me but all the players. Keeps it fun.

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