

# Cognizant Founders Cup

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Clifton, New Jersey, USA

Upper Montclair Country Club

**Mollie Marcoux Samaan**

**Selena Samuela**

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Mollie Marcoux Samaan before the beautiful Cognizant Founders Cup here in Upper Montclair, New Jersey. Mollie, no surprise to anyone here, this is a big week for Girls Golf with our One Million More campaign.

Can you tell me what Girls Golf means to you personally, and your experience with the brand, the program?

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, Girls Golf is a huge part of what we do. I think it's our responsibility to use our platform to elevate girls and women and to use golf to be able to educate girls to be able to enrich their lives.

It's very much integrated into everything that we do. So this is a really exciting week to be able to celebrate our Founders, who without them we would not have this organization. We stand on their shoulders.

To be able to then integrate a Girls Golf program into the tournament this week, it's right on mission and right on what we're trying to accomplish.

**Q. Speaking of the Founders, how cool is it to all in one place have the past, present, and future all together, and to be honoring some great pioneers in Betsy and Pia?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, again, one of our big pillars and platforms is the integration across all parts of the LPGA, so this week gives us that platform.

We have the very best women in the world competing for \$3 million, which is amazing and closer to commensurate with their talent.

We've got some of our past legends and pioneers in Pia and Betsy, and that's super important to us.

And then we have these amazing Girls Golf golfers who are the next generation. We're inspiring them every day



with what we do.

So this week is fun. This is all about the LPGA and we're going to take full advantage of it.

**Q. Yeah. And with reaching one million girls, how fast until we get One Million More, and what are some of the goals of the brand in reaching two million faster?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: We're going to get there a lot faster than the first million because we're super focused on raising the funds to have impact. That's really what we're doing. We really believe it's our responsibility to give this game to as many girls as possible; girls from all different backgrounds who maybe haven't felt comfortable in the game, didn't have experience with the game, whose families had never played golf.

We think the game of golf is too good to not give it to as many girls as we can. So we're going to get there fast. We're completely dug in on it. We are going to use all of our resources to do it and make a real difference.

**Q. Also standing right here on the tee box with us is Selena Samuela. Come join us over here.**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Whoo-hoo! With our matching hats.

**Q. Yes, with your matching hats. Girls Golf means a lot to you, too. Can you share your story, your experience with Girls Golf, in the program?**

SELENA SAMUELA: Yeah, absolutely. I think first and foremost, making sure that we make golf a more inclusive space should be a priority for anybody that's involved in this sport.

For myself, I did not grow up with this sport. I grew up in Italy until I was ten and moved to the States. My family didn't have a lot of money, so we never thought that like golf could be for me.

Also, where I grew up there weren't a lot of women playing golf, and so getting involved with Girls Golf seems like an



incredibly good fit.

To get girls from all different economic backgrounds and people of color involved in the sport I think is incredibly important and should be, again, a priority for all of us who are involved in the sport.

**Q. Mollie, how amazing is it to have ambassadors of this program, not just girls' ambassadors, but ambassadors like Selena to help encourage more girls to join the game?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, that's our game, right? We need to be able to scale, need to get our word out there. We need to give this game to as many people as possible. When you get great people with a big voice and a big following talking about the really value of Girls Golf, the value of sports for girls, I think we all know that giving girls sports is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

Not just for the enrichment they get while they're playing, but for what it does for them in their lives afterwards. As I said before, it's our responsibility to do that to all people from all walks of life. That's what we're really committed to. It's amazing to have people committed to that with us and on our side.

**Q. Mollie, what's been the biggest surprise thus far in your tenure as LPGA commissioner?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: How red eyes are really not good for you personally. No, the surprises have just been on the impact that we can really have. I mean, I think that's our responsibility and that's our opportunity, because we're not just the LPGA Tour. We hit Girls Golf, we hit amateur golfers, we intersect with the amazing LPGA teaching professionals, and we have this unique opportunity to really elevate women through the platform.

So that's been a pleasant surprise.

I think one of the other surprises is this is a complicated organization. We have to do everything we can to be clear with our mission and move it forward.

**Q. Mollie, you hosted a pretty big meeting at The Chevron Championship a few weeks ago with some of the heads of the other tours and organizations. What were some of the priorities that ended up coming out of that meeting?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Yeah, first we wanted to educate. We wanted to sort of set the stage for where women's golf is -- where we've been, where we are currently, and where we think we can go, and intersect that

with where women's sports are.

So we brought in some experts from the industry at large to be able to educate the golf leaders, and they're really committed to what we're doing. They're really committed to growing Girls Golf collectively, and I think the idea was, let's bring all the people with the most power in the industry together, give them some education, and think innovatively about the future. What can we do structurally? What can we do to move our initiatives forward?

They're super engaged and super passionate about it, so I think it was a really big next step. Next step because we been doing it all along. They all been dug in, but this is that next iteration.

**Q. When do you think we'll see some of the fruits of that meeting out here on the LPGA Tour?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: Again, it's a process, and already tons of ideas have been circulating. I think now people are at kind of level set on where we are, and so I think you'll see some change right away.

I'm optimistic about where we're going.

**Q. On the PGA Tour they have the Player Impact Fund for some of the bigger needle movers in the game. Has there been any thought to bringing something like that to the LPGA?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: I think not to comment specifically on some of the ideas, but we're really looking at how we can work collectively as a team. This is the players' tour, and so how can we -- I look at our player meeting in Arizona and looked out and saw the 150 best players in the world and I just thought about the collective power of "we."

How can we all come together to elevate this?

So we're thinking of creative ideas. I don't think the players need an incentive to grow the LPGA Tour. It's their tour. How can we more importantly kind of elevate them? How can we use our sponsorships to give them more revenue opportunities? How can we think about giving them a more stable existence out here through our partnerships, whether it's through minimum payouts for different events or stipends at different events so they can get to the first tee ready to perform.

That's really some of the things we've been focusing on with our partnership team, are what are the creative ways we can make the lives of our players better, to be able to use their platform more aggressively.



**Q. Do you feel the players are buying into elevating the tour?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: I think so. Listen, at the end of the day that's one of the reasons why I love this job, is because it's their tour. We work for them. We serve them. Any decision we make is always to elevate the tour.

I think they see that, and so continuing to talk about it, continuing to get their feedback, continuing to bring the player directors, but also the players at large into what we do is really important for us moving forward.

They're passionate. I ask players for a meeting and they're, absolutely. What do you want to know? What do you want to hear? How can we work together?

It is their tour.

**Q. There has been a large influx of money into golf in general over in the last few years. Has that changed your goal for growing purse sizes or partnerships or anything like that?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yeah, I think it's really important that we continue to grow at a faster clip even, just because you don't want that divide to become bigger. We want to catch up.

So obviously we're watching carefully and trying to figure out how -- part of the commission's goal is how we can all come together and use some of that money that's being invested in the game to grow the women's game, too.

This is a team sport. I always say that, and like Seth Waugh will always say that. Life is a team sport. Well I think golf is a team sport, and we got get everybody rowing in the same direction.

**Q. Few weeks ago at The Chevron some comments had come out from Greg Norman saying he's still very interested in the women's side of the game. Have you heard anything from them more recently about getting involved with the LPGA?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yeah, I'm not positive of what he was referring to, but as I've said before, it's our responsibility to listen and learn. Right now we're focused on what we're doing and focused on -- we're really bullish about where we're going, so that's kind of where we are right now.

So nothing new to report.

**Q. I will wrap it up here. One for both Selena and Mollie. This being our first event of four in the New York/New Jersey area, Selena, for you who lives here, how great is it that you're going to have four LPGA events right in your backyard? Will you be attending?**

SELENA SAMUELA: Oh, my goodness. I am just over the moon. Yeah, this is a dream come true. I got here and I was immediately fan-girling over all the incredible women athletes here.

Yeah, I mean, I hope I'll be invited back.

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: We'll see how your game is today. Let's see and then we'll decide if you're going to be invited back.

**Q. Mollie, how important has this market and area been for the Tour this year, and how excited are you to kick off our first event in the area?**

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Yeah, well, obviously I have a strong affinity to New Jersey and New York. But we'll see. This is a very dense area with a lot of people, a lot of passionate sports people, so them being able to see the LPGA on multiple occasions is really important for us, to be able to kind of take that one plus one equals three.

So it's super important to us and it's really fun, too. We've got great partners in this area. We've got great tournaments. We've got great golf courses. We think this is going to really be a needle mover for us.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Thank you both for being out here and good luck today.

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAAN: Let's go get 'em, team. Let's get 'em.

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