

# Cognizant Founders Cup

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Clifton, New Jersey, USA

Upper Montclair Country Club

## Marina Alex

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Here with Marina Alex after her first round of the Cognizant Founders Cup. Take us through the round. Obviously start with the bogey on 1. Really turned it on on the back nine. Just take us through it.**

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, this is a great golf course. Really demanding off the tee and into the greens. The first hole is a good opening hole. I hit two nice shots and was just kind of in a tricky area over the back of the green and didn't get up and down for par.

All in all, I played steady on the front. Didn't have my best ball striking, but kind of just worked around and two-putted everywhere that I could.

Got a couple unlucky breaks in divots in fairways and couldn't really get that close to the hole. And then I made two really great shots on the par -- I think it's 13 is the reachable -- 12 is the reachable par-5?

Sorry. Yeah, 12. Hit a nice driver and nice 5-wood and a tap-in birdie. Kind of got me back to level par, which was great. I just start cruising from there off the tee and into the green and really made some great putts in that latter stretch of the back nine.

**Q. Was there anything maybe at the turn, maybe nerves got calmed or there was something that --**

MARINA ALEX: Maybe.

**Q. -- clicked?**

MARINA ALEX: I think it was just more me trying to go patient and not getting frustrated with the result. I was getting a little bit frustrated in the front nine. Felt like I should've been scoring better than I was.

Yeah, sometimes I'm a bit hard on myself. I think it was just trying to wait for the opportunities to come, and they did, and I was able to take advantage of them.

I actually think I hit it in the hole on the other par-5 on my



third shot and then it hopped out to an inch and Sue Witters had to come and repair the cup.

So that was my easiest birdie. The par-5s were kind to me on the back nine.

**Q. Everyone has said, that we brought in, it's a very challenging course.**

MARINA ALEX: It is.

**Q. What is it about this course that makes it so challenging? As a follow up, what are you able to take advantage of and what are you still trying to navigate?**

MARINA ALEX: It's a very demanding course off the tee. Fairways are probably some of the narrowest we see all season.

The rough is okay. I wouldn't say it's easy but not crazy penalizing. Just really depending on the angles you have into the holes.

Couple overhanging trees. Like even if you're in the fairway, might not be the best approach in, so you're just trying to strategize angles.

For the most part a fair amount of slope to the green, so it's just finding the right sections, knowing where to leave it. Sometimes 30 feet below is better than ten feet above. That's just understanding that and discipline in club selection.

**Q. Obviously playing here in New Jersey, native to New Jersey.**

MARINA ALEX: Yep.

**Q. Maybe one of the few on tour that can speak to playing very close to where you grew up. How special is that and what kind of support have you gotten?**

MARINA ALEX: It's really cool. I had a couple guys come out today that worked at the club that I grew up playing at, which was nice. I see them here once a year maybe, but



they're always big fans and they come out and it's good to see them and catch up. Reminds me of days when I was 13, 14; I've known them that long.

I think growing up playing not particularly out here, but courses in the area, there is a lot of similarities just in the grass and the designs, kind of understanding when to be aggressive and when to be like, absolutely not; this isn't the right time.

So I think that kind of helps just at some level, just knowing that. Not necessarily needing to think too hard on what may be a good or bad decision in the moment.

**Q. Here obviously at the Founders Cup we are celebrating the two Pioneers this week, Beth Daniel, Pat Bradley. What he have they meant to you, the Founders in general, and how have you idolized them as growing up as a woman in golf?**

MARINA ALEX: They are wonderful women. I think I met Pat way back when I think I was on the Symetra Tour. We were doing -- I think Val Skinner was having one of her charity events. It was a smaller one, and I got to know Pat there, and she's wonderful.

And Beth Daniel and Meg Mallon are incredibly good friends of mine. You know, South Florida. I've been so fortunate to get to know them as mentors, but also just as friends.

And they are so supportive of me every step of the way. Always encouraging. Play with them. We had a great time, I think it was probably a couple months ago. We were in Florida. I played with Beth, played with Karrie, and I played with JoAnne Carner, which was unbelievably fun.

And Meg was out. Meg is not playing a whole lot of the golf right now, but she was out hanging out with us.

Just that experience alone, you don't get a lot of that. I feel like our younger generations, they know these wonderful women and everything that they've done for the sport and for the LPGA Tour, but I think we -- it's our duty to kind of continue on with cultivating those friendships and mentorships and making sure their legacy is known among all of the generations out here.

It's really valuable and important.

**Q. How important is it that we are kind of celebrating these Pioneers, and like you said, introducing them to the younger generation that maybe didn't get a chance to watch them growing up?**

MARINA ALEX: He's a huge deal. You see what they do with the Masters with opening tee shots. You know, who is it, Jack and Gary and was it Tom Watson this year? I'm not sure.

You kind of see a lot of that kind of celebration on the men's game, and I think we're doing a great job here and we need to continue to do that. At all of our majors really.

I think it's very important to have these women a part of our tour and continue to guide and just kind of continue to mentor the younger generations.

Myself included. I have been out here 11 years, but still a lot to be learned from them and a lot that those younger than me can continue to learn from them.

**Q. Back to the golf. You're at Upper Montclair. Very tight leaderboard. What's it going to take to maybe separate yourself from the pack?**

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, I'm not really sure I have a great answer for that other than just continuing to play solid golf. It's a ball striking course in a lot of ways, because if you're in the wrong places, greenside, up and downs become super tough. You then get faced with hard par putts.

I think trying to keep that in mind of just off the tee and on to the green, as many fairways and greens as you can hit is really going to make a difference out here.

It's a fairly simple game plan. It's just as far as confidence and comfortability to execute for the next three days is a whole 'nother story. It's really not a change in strategy. It's just executing the strategy.

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