

Mizuho Americas Open

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Marina Alex

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone here in the media center both in person and online. Here with Marina Alex. Marina, you're a New Jersey native, as you said. Lived about 30 minutes from here. How great is it to have a home game for you this week?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, great. We've had a lot of home games this year. Next week is a home game. KPMG is a home game. Founders. So it's pretty amazing to be playing more golf in the state of New Jersey.

There is a ton of great golf here, so it's wonderful that we're getting to showcase some LPGA players on a course like Liberty National, which is really wonderful.

Q. Speaking of which, how amazing is it that the LPGA Tour has this opportunity to play at Liberty National, and how important is it for us to have these types of opportunities on these courses?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, Liberty has -- the reputation is great. They held a Presidents Cup. Had a couple playoff events for the PGA TOUR over the course of the last ten years, so it's nice for us to be playing on these reputable courses as well.

And the experience overall has been so cool. We're staying downtown at the Conrad and taking the ferry over. It's such a unique week, and I think all the players have been enjoying it.

Q. Speaking of that, also Mizuho is putting on a great event. Getting players hotel rooms, allowing access to the ferry. How amazing is that for you this week?

MARINA ALEX: They have been unbelievable. Mizuho, their hospitality, everything that they're putting together for the LPGA, it's a testament to how invested they are in women's golf, which is great.

Q. Can you tell us what it takes to be successful on this golf course? What are its challenges?

MARINA ALEX: I think it's a good course. It has this if-the-wind-picks-up feel to it. It's kind of along Hudson. There are some areas that are exposed. I think there will definitely need to be some ball flight control. Whoever is winning this week will need to hit some precise tee shots and good approaches into the greens.

There are some pretty tricky run-off areas if you're missing greens in the wrong places. The up and downs become pretty challenging.

So there is some strategy involved to having success out here. Some of it will be weather dependant in terms of how low the scores may or may not go. Right now it's set up great. It's set up really fair. I think that you'll have a very solid champion out of this golf course.

Q. Are you paired with a junior?

MARINA ALEX: Not yet. So my understanding of it is -- of the LPGA, is we're doing our groups for the first two days and the juniors are doing their groups. I believe they're alternating or stacked among the tee times.

And then on the weekend after we're cut, I believe it'll be two LPGA and one junior mixed together then on Saturday and Sunday.

Q. Did you play a practice round with a junior?

MARINA ALEX: Yes, I did. Michelle and the whole team at Mizuho, they set up a mentoring type program that they had this week, so some of us volunteered to either have lunch with a junior or play with a junior, and I got to play with Sara Im. Really great girl. She just committed to Vanderbilt, so be another Commodore starting in August.

So it was really cool to meet her and kind of just help her along or whatever she may need moving forward. It's nice. I think the whole point of this week is to make that transition from junior golf into collegiate and professional golf a little bit more seamless for them.

I know when I was a junior nothing like this existed. You would come out, and if you qualified, let's say for a U.S. Open or played a professional event as an amateur or as a



junior, it was a little scary.

So I think this is a great way to kind of break that ice and make it just a little bit more of a welcoming environment for them.

Q. And how would you describe your good friend, Michelle, as a host this week?

MARINA ALEX: She's killing it.

Q. In what way?

MARINA ALEX: She's crushing it. The whole concept of the event itself is unique and new, and it's a great way to just show more young talent in the golf -- in women's golf in general.

But also just like the amenities. Everything that we as the pros are getting from the gifting when we arrive. Nike swag, all different stuff, staying at Conrad, the ferry, this golf course.

Overall when you think about it in the grand scheme it's really one of the best run events we have so far in addition to our majors.

Q. For a new event.

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, they're absolutely doing a wonderful job. Michelle, the team at Excel, they're really doing fantastic.

Q. So you're a New Jersey native.

MARINA ALEX: Yes.

Q. Talk about having this large swing around here. Are you feeling the buzz from the New York/New Jersey area?

MARINA ALEX: I think so. I think it would've been more interesting to see if there was a little bit more fluidity from a schedule standpoint and we played maybe let's say three or four weeks here consecutively.

We had great buzz for Founders. This event has got a lot of traction. Then we head to Atlantic City. We do have that one break off before coming bag to KPMG. It would've been kind of cool to see them all three in a row, because I think it would've built up a lot of hype.

Baltusrol and Liberty aren't that far away from one another, so when people get wind of, oh, there is a golf tournament around and another golf tournament, hopefully we're going

to pull up some really big crowds.

Q. And you're playing at Liberty, but the LPGA is going to a lot of great courses this year.

MARINA ALEX: Unbelievable.

Q. Especially the majors.

MARINA ALEX: Yes.

Q. How much of that in your opinion he will elevate your guys' game to get that exposure?

MARINA ALEX: It's key. It really is. And I know as players we been saying that for a long time, it's kind of a missing piece in the puzzle for us.

When we are playing great golf courses like this week or Baltusrol or Pebble or wherever we're playing, you know, just in this year, I think it just helps show how great women's golf is because there is a benchmark that's been set by men's golf, the PGA TOUR of how wonderful those courses are.

When you see unbelievable champions on the women's side playing at these courses I think it just makes everyone understand how strong our product really is.

Q. And you talked about the amenities that Mizuho is putting up. They're also putting up a very large purse.

MARINA ALEX: Yes.

Q. Is that just an added thing as you guys have seen other sponsors put up purses? Is it gratifying? Where do you take that as a player and where would you like to see it go?

MARINA ALEX: I think it's great. I think it's just basically setting a new benchmark for our tour. As new events come in and we have new title sponsors, it's nice to see that we are starting at 2.5 and higher range.

I think that kind of just pushes the envelope across the board, where when sponsors renew or if a new title comes in, you can't really go lower than that. The standard has been set. I think that's really important.

So hats off to Mizuho. We have had a couple other events that are coming in around the \$3 million mark. I think it's really important to keep elevating our game.

THE MODERATOR: I'll close with this question: You hosted an AJGA event before.

MARINA ALEX: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Take us through that experience and how important AJGA is to you.

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, I grew up playing the AJGA. It took me a little while to get my status on the AJGA tour. I think my first event was in seventh grade, and relatively speaking that's old now, I think. (Laughter.)

But it was my pathway to getting a college scholarship, and it still to this day is the strongest junior golf tour. So if you're a junior golfer and you're looking to get recruited by colleges, you're playing the AJGA and obviously trying to play your U.S. Junior and U.S. Junior Girls.

But it is still the top of the top, so it's wonderful to have all the AJGA players here.

I did host an event for three years and it's just nice to be able to kind of be involved and give back just a little bit to a tour that really helped me. If you look at it from the entirety of my career, you know, it's the beginning step. But it's the most important step really.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time.

MARINA ALEX: Thanks.

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