



Augusta National Women's Amateur

Saturday, April 4, 2026

Maria José Marin

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's a privilege to welcome our 2026 Augusta National Women's Amateur champion Maria José Marin.

Maria José, congratulations on your victory, both setting a championship record at 14-under par and becoming the first champion at Augusta National from Colombia.

You faced an early deficit before responding with six birdies to take control down the stretch. Can you describe your emotions when that last putt went in to win the Augusta National Women's Amateur?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: My emotions the whole round were a roller coaster. I didn't start that solid. I was looking at the leaderboard, and Asterisk was already making a move. But I just reminded myself that I had to stay really, really patient because anything can happen out here.

When that last putt sank in, I just thought to myself, well, I made it. All of my hard work has paid off, and I'm just extremely proud of myself.

Q. Congratulations. I'm curious what club you hit into 13, but mostly when you finished the hole and saw the leaderboard -- when did you first see the leaderboard? What was going through your head with what happened with Asterisk?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: On 13 I had around 190 into the pin, and from the crowds from behind, I knew it was going to be pretty close. Originally I had a plan to lay up into the hole and just have a wedge in, but I was kind of feeling my momentum and I was hitting the ball pretty, pretty solid.

I just told Mr. Darren, I'm going for it. It's now or never, I'm going for it. It was perfect.

When I finished the hole, I really tried not to look at the leaderboard, but I heard some -- I didn't hear the people clapping from behind. So I think that was a sign that something happened. The first time that I saw the leaderboard was actually on hole 15, and I think I should not have looked at it (laughter).

Q. I don't know if you realize what you just accomplished. Although I'm Mexican, we feel that victory is ours as a region. What would you tell to every little girl around Colombia and Latin America who dream to do something probably similar to what you've just done?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: Of course this is a win for my country and just beyond proud to represent them. I am half Mexican too, so it is with great pride that I represent Mexico in the bottom of my heart too.

I can just say dream big. Never give up on your dreams. I would never, ever think that I was going to be right here right

now, but it's just because all of my hard work and my perseverance and the love that I have for the game.

Q. Can you talk about the people you celebrated with when you got off the 18th green, and what will you do later to celebrate?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: When I got off of 18, of course my mom and my dad were there. We talked about it yesterday, not a lot, but we talked about what would happen if you win? I was like, I want you both out on the green. I want you there because I want you to be the first ones I hug.

After that, I want my teammates me. Both Reagan and Sara were waiting for me too. That hug felt great. Both of my coaches, Jorge and Hernan were there, as well. Gave them a hug. Nicolas Echavarria was there too, which was a great surprise. I didn't expect him to be here. It was great to receive congratulations from him. Also Matteo, who won the LAC event, was also here. That was great as well. There was a lot of people just out there supporting me.

Yeah, it's everything I dreamed of.

Q. Maria, can you tell us what your plan was on the 12th hole and then what you were thinking when you saw the ball in the air and landed and how it all played out?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: So my plan on 12 was going to the middle of the green down the left. Of course the ball didn't turn down the left, it turned straight to the pin, and I think I got tricked with the wind because I felt it off my back. I think I've been kind of a victim of Amen Corner now because definitely gust of wind, it totally tricked me. It was into the wind; it was not downwind.

When my ball stayed there -- I think it's a miracle that my ball stayed there. I just kind of have to make par and walk away out of here because this just happens once.

Q. I know this is very fresh, so forgive me. You're going to carry this title for the rest of your life no matter what your professional aspirations may be. Do you have any idea how you're going to carry this with you, communicate this to juniors growing up, and just kind of carry this throughout your life as an Augusta National Women's Amateur champion?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: This is only going to help me boost my confidence. I think every time I'm having a hard time or kind of a low in my golf, just remind that I was able to do this and I was able to overcome all the pressure. That means winning at Augusta. And just using it in my favor to just keep working hard and never giving up.

As I said yesterday, inspiring younger generations for me is always going to be my main goal, and all of the little girls and little boys watching me back home, it's great to have them watching because that's what I wanted to accomplish one day.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your caddie Darren Woo. He's a local firefighter here. What was his impact on today and the last few days, and how did he help you win?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: With Mr. Darren, I think he was my greatest support during the whole week and a key to the victory. He kept me calm through the whole round, same as in Champions Retreat. Of course this round was extra special because of course it's a round at Augusta, and there's a lot of pressure.

Every time that I did a bad shot, he's like, well, breathe, calm down. You're going to work it out. It's fine. Give yourself a chance. Nothing happened. Keep your head up. I think all of his words of encouragement just helped me get the win today and get my mind on the goal.

Q. Two questions. If you've checked your phone yet, how many text messages do you have? And how are you going to celebrate this?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I haven't checked my phone. I finished on 18, gave a lot, a lot of hugs, and my phone must be exploding right now in my bag. I do not have it with me.

I think I might have over 300 messages on my phone right now. Just with the other messages from Champions Retreat as well because I haven't finished responding to that.

I'm going to have a nice dinner with my family and all my friends that came and watched me play. Yeah, I don't know what other celebration. I think a nice meal is just a reward.

Q. Can you talk about the relationship with your dad and how it's evolved, and the unselfish decision not to be on the bag this week?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: With the relationship with my dad, as I've said, he's always been my role model. He's been by my side since I started playing golf. He was the one that taught me the love for this game.

He decided this year that he can't be on the bag. He had the experience with me last year. He said, you need someone that knows. I love you with all my heart, but you need someone that knows how to handle a tournament of this level. I think it was one of the most beautiful decisions that he could have ever made because he was totally selfless. He was like, I know that you need someone else, but I'm going to be there supporting you.

Q. In connection to what you were saying, to win in Augusta there's a few things that need to align. There's signs that happen during the week. I wonder what were those signs for you? What things happened this week that made you finish as a champion?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think I felt pretty in control of my game the whole week. I think the confidence of the win in the last college event I got, like it kind of got to my head. I was like, okay, I think I can win this, but I have to work hard for this.

One of the signs was the ball staying on that ridge on 12. I've never seen a ball stay there, and I think it was just God holding the ball there, like, don't move. This is happening for something.

Then I think getting into the green on 13, that was another sign. I mean, I stayed out of my strategy, and it worked out perfect.

Q. What can you say about what happened in this round at Augusta? Because the three previous final rounds here didn't go the way you wanted. How did you sort of shelve those memories and play so well today?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think just from past experiences I was -- of course I was nervous today, but I was extremely nervous my last three times that I played here. My golf, yes, it was in a good spot, but it was not like I was totally in control of it.

I think I just got a little desperate in past years trying to force things out here, and that's one of the things that you can't do here. You can't force things. You just have to just be smart, stick to your strategy, and let the birdies come.

Q. You shot a 4-under 68 to win last week, come-from-behind, a 4-under 68 to win this week, come-from-behind. Do you think it played to your benefit to not be in the final group and to chase a little bit?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I do think it played into my favor not being in the last group, and just playing a little relaxed. Of course I heard the people clapping and yelling from behind, but I knew that my golf was in a good spot. I was hitting pretty good shots too. Early on, it was a pretty far gap, like that thing that happened at hole 6, Asterisk got up to 15- or 14-under, and at the moment I was still 10.

So I was just like, okay, whatever happens, I'm just going to play my golf. I think something clicked right when I made my second birdie.

Q. If you could sum up everything you're feeling right now in one word, what would it be?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I would say extreme happiness and just extremely proud of myself and all of the hard work and the ability that I had out there to overcome all the pressure because winning in this place, I don't think there's ever going to be a feeling to describe it. It's just magical.

This is the temple of golf, and just getting this win, it's amazing for me.

Q. Last year after you won NAAs, you even mentioned then how motivated you were to get back to this stage, and that was almost 10 months' wait time. With everything you've accomplished in your amateur career up to this point -- I know you still have some time left at Arkansas, but how do you reset your goals now after becoming a champion here?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think after NAAs there was a lot of talk of what my future would look like. It was, yes, a really important win, but I still knew that -- like deep down myself, I still knew that I had to improve on some things.

Well, this win, it changes up a little of my goals, but I think I'm staying down the same path of just finishing my last year at Arkansas, just getting all the experience that I had -- well, I still have one more year at this event, so just all the experience I can obtain from that last year and that last year at Augusta are going to help me set up future goals.

Q. In your moment of glory now, do you have any feelings of -- what are your feelings for what Asterisk went through? It seemed to come out of the blue for her.

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: Well, definitely what happened to Asterisk, I do not wish it to any golfer. She was playing incredible golf, and she played incredible golf for -- in all of Champions Retreat and for the first 11 holes here at Augusta.

I think she just has to be really proud of herself, just accomplishing what she accomplished last year here and all that she has to accomplish. Just keeping her head up because it's really, really hard to go through that.

Q. I never heard what club you hit on 13.

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: On 13 I hit my 4-hybrid.

Q. On 15 when you joked that you shouldn't have looked at the leaderboard, I'm curious, was there any surprise when you saw what had happened with the scores? How did that make it harder to finish the last four holes with a big lead?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: When I saw the leaderboard at 15, I think my adrenaline was contained, and I was like breathing pretty well, and I was following a routine and breathing. Everything was going fine.

I looked at the leaderboard, and I think just my adrenaline went up. I had a pretty routine shot, and I just flew it past the green. As I'm saying, I think it was just a little bit of nerves. It made it pretty hard because then I started doing actual math of what I had to do, how I had to finish. Just keeping my two feet at the moment, I think that was the hardest.

Darren was the one who told me, just breathe. Stay calm. You're fine. We have a strategy for this. Especially on hole 15, just trying to walk off with a bogey and nothing worse.

Q. What club on 16, by the way?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: On 16, it was my 7-iron. I had 160 to the pin.

Q. After that shot on 16, did you feel a little more confident? Was that the turning point for you?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think it definitely did something because I think now the closest one -- well, the hottest player out there was Andrea. She started playing extremely well. In my head I was like, okay, if I don't play well, she's going to come from behind.

So just hitting that great shot on 16 exactly how I planned it and just walking away with a birdie there, it was just like, okay, I think it's down. Just enjoy the walk, but still be smart of what you're going to do.

Q. Two quick questions. First, is there a Spanish word for "Razorback"?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I don't know. I think it's jabalí.

Q. That means mean pig, doesn't it? I actually Googled it before I came down here, and they didn't have an answer. The Augusta National has been part of outreach very, very seriously in Latin America for quite some time now. Did that touch you and your family at some point years ago? Are you aware of the presence that American golfers were doing everything they could to spread the game of golf all over the world?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think Augusta -- well, the tournament's growth, Augusta National Women's Amateur growth, exponentially it just went up incredible. Since the tournament was made, it was broadcast on TV. It was accessible for all the people to watch and all the little kids to watch.

Back home we knew about the tournament, but we didn't know a lot until we watched the last round. It was extremely inspirational for everyone. For my dad, he was the one that says, well, I think that tournament seems pretty good. We're going to do everything that's on our hands to get you in.

I think, same as me, a lot of other Latinas and Colombians are hoping and dreaming of being here.

Q. What do your parents do, and how did they help support you kind of financially through your junior golf career?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: My dad, he's a businessman. My mom, she's a lawyer. When she had my little brother, she just stayed at home helping him with everything. Financially, we never, never had to struggle. He was just, okay, let's go to this tournament. Let's do our best.

I think the greatest moment was when I was around 14 that I came and stayed all the summer to play in five tournaments here in the states. We had never done that. We were just play one tournament then go back to Colombia, but we decided that it was a moment because it was my freshman year of high school and I was in my recruiting process.

Yeah, I think all of the support that I got from both of them -- my dad being the greatest financial support and my mom being my greatest cheerleader from back home -- it's just a blessing.

Q. You mentioned a couple minutes ago that Augusta National is the temple of golf. Golf fans from all over the world dream of coming to the Masters. For people that may not think they want to attend the Augusta National Women's Amateur, can you on this stage describe what those galleries are like and the energy you felt? Not just for your group, not just for the ladies that made the cut, but just for women's amateur golf?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: I think just hearing the galleries scream and clap and giving us, all of the players, just unconditional support, it's a one of a kind experience here. This is the last traditional tournament that exists without any type of phones, and I think that plays a big role because it lets people to stay in the present and to be in the moment.

If they're going to tell what happened, I think they're going to be pretty excited to tell what happened. While you didn't record it, you have it on your mind, and I think that's the memories that you make are the greatest blessing that you can have.

For everyone that plans to attend the Augusta National Women's Amateur, I would just say do it. I think it's getting as big as the Masters, and the impact that this tournament has had on all of the players is just amazing.

Q. Can you take us through which clubs you used today when you made your birdies?

MARIA JOSÉ MARIN: On No. 2 I had my 3-wood, which had a pretty lucky bounce into the bunker and right into the green. So I used my 3-wood.

Then on 5 I used my 5-iron. I had around 175 to the pin.

On 7 I had around 100. I used my 48 degrees.

On 9 I had 110 to the pin. I used my 48 degrees again.

On No. 13 I used my 4-hybrid, which I had 190.

Then on No. 17 I used my 7-iron.

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