

Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Monday, 5 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Azahara Munoz Carlota Ciganda

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome Carlota Ciganda and Azahara Muñoz of Team Spain to the interview room.

You've had a chance to practise today on Le Golf National. Can you give us your first impressions of the golf course?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: We both played 128 holes today and the golf course is looking amazing. It's pretty tough. I think hitting the fairways is going to be definitely the key. Can't really do much in the rough most of the time.

Yeah, hitting lots of fairways but I think we are all very lucky to be here. The golf course is looking amazes and it's very exciting.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: Yeah, very similar to what Aza said, I think hitting fairways is going to help a lot for the second shots to hit greens, and I think it's important to see where the pin positions are. I think it can be more aggressive in some holes than others depending on the pin positions.

But I think it's a great ball-striking course and I think it's in, yeah, great shape and we are very lucky to be here.

THE MODERATOR: And you both competed in an Olympic Games before for Spain. How does it feel to be back playing in another Olympics representing your own country?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: It's amazing. I think Rio was really fun. It was the first one. Tokyo was a bit different with COVID and all of that. So I think that's a bit of a blur.

We didn't get to do much, really. But then we both landed on Saturday and being able to come here to the golf course and seeing the crowds, I've never seen anything like it. So it definitely got me very excited to get going.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: Yeah, it's a big honour to represent



Spain. I think we both love being here. We love wearing the Spanish colors. We've been playing since we were amateurs lots of tournaments for Spain, and I think, yeah, we are very happy to represent Spain in our third Olympics.

Q. Were you guys able to get out and walk during the means comp yesterday? Were you out in the action?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: Yeah, we did on Saturday walk the last few holes, and then yesterday, we tried but couldn't see anything. I have never been in a men's event when it's this big. So I ended up actually going inside and watching it on TV because I couldn't get close and I couldn't see anything.

But at least it was great to be outside and seeing the atmosphere, and yeah, it definitely give me chills. I've literally never experienced anything like it. It was amazing.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: Yeah, same, went and followed Jon the last four holes, 15 through 18. Yeah, the crowd's amazing. It's so nice to see so many people because in the last Olympics, we didn't see anybody, yeah.

Yeah, I think the crowd's unbelievable and hopefully we can have similar crowds this week, and yeah, have a great week.

Q. I know there were a lot of people supporting Victor Perez yesterday. But did it feel like there were a lot of Spanish people here, too?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: There were a lot. There's a lot of Spanish people that live in France, in Paris. I think it's quite normal, and then the north of Spain is not that far. Even me, I'm from the south of Spain and it's only an hour and 15-minute flight.

So it's really easy to get to Paris. So I actually thought of that. I saw a lot of Spanish flags out there.

Q. You guys arrive at the halfway point of the Olympics. Is it weird to watch the Opening Ceremony and everything taking place knowing you're not there



but you're involved as an Olympian?

CARLOTA CIGANDA: I think it's hard missing the Opening Ceremony because I think it's a special event.

But playing the second week, I think it's just tough to come for one day or a couple days and then go. We have such a busy life, we play pretty much every week. I think we both enjoy being at home and having a week off.

Having the women play the second week, it's just tough.

Maybe they should switch it up every now and then.

Q. There's been a decent amount of talk about having a mixed event. I imagine you would want to play with Jon Rahm. But could you imagine how that would work between being asked to play maybe six days of golf or five days of golf?

CARLOTA CIGANDA: I do think that they could change the format and maybe it more, I don't know, match play, more fun. Mixed events would be amazing but I don't know how you would do like countries and men and women. Like I think it would be complicated. I'm not sure with the Rolex Rankings and how many girls, and men, as well, they play.

So I don't know how it would be. But I think, yeah, it would be more fun for sure. I think it's a week that you can try different things.

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: It sounds amazing but I just don't know how make it work. Like we are already skipping a tournament in America. Then you throw another week. It's just hard to make it work. But it does sound amazing.

Q. You mentioned crowds. What's the biggest crowd you've played before in a major, and then I would also throw Solheim Cup in there, to compare with the atmosphere you saw yesterday.

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: The biggest crowd and something similar is when we first played in Taiwan and Yani Tseng played amazing. I played with her the last three rounds. I swear it might have been something similar to that but only in our group, nowhere else.

Yesterday, I couldn't believe it. When you get to the first tee and there's like thousands and thousands of people, and I guess this golf course really makes it look good, like with all the stadium-looking holes. I guess Solheim is the most we've played. But it doesn't come close to this.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: Yeah, I remember a U.S. Open in

Lancaster when Inbee won, but the last couple days, it was more. It's just crazy how many people was watching. I wasn't expecting this much.

Q. And secondly, from your own experience at the last two Games, what is the feeling like playing in the Olympics compared with majors or other big events you play on the LPGA?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: I think playing Olympics is different. Like in major, you play for yourself. You're out there on your own.

This week, we come as a team. We have our coaches. We have our captains. You feel pride representing your country, like, both Carlota and I both love doing and we don't get to do it anymore.

There's the amazing part of it. When you're playing a major, you're out on your own and everybody is playing for themselves. It's nice to be here as a group and the athletes supporting each other and taking other team's scores. There's something about it, like a lot of funny memes that come on Instagram and whatever; you never watched the sport and you watch it, it doesn't matter. It's fun to support each other, and playing for your country is like nothing better.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: What she said and I think also playing only once in four weeks is what makes it so special. That's why you want to be here. Like she said, I love sports, so I just follow every sports. I was watching handball yesterday. I watched sports.

Yeah, sometimes, you are watching like not a normal week but this week, I just put the TV and if anything is playing, I watch it, and I love it.

Q. If Spain were playing, what would be the most boring sport to watch that you have to force yourself to watch Spain?

AZAHARA MUÑOZ: Trying to get her in trouble -- not a great question, what's the best sport she wants to see.

CARLOTA CIGANDA: I love everything but when I think about the Olympics, I think athletics, I love the gymnastics. Those ones I love. Then Spain is really good in team. So I watch football, handball, hockey, tennis, golf, everything.

Q. You talked about the course early on. For the men, 18 played as a par 4, and there was a lot of carnage. It's going to play as a par 5 for the women. Do you think that makes it more entertaining or is there just as many opportunities for disasters?



CARLOTA CIGANDA: I think it's good. I think it's a great risk and reward hole. It's very reachable but you still have to hit a great shot to the green. I think if we don't get much rain, the greens are going to start getting a bit firmer. It requires two good shots to hit on the green, and if you are in trouble, you have a chance to lay up and make a birdie or in worst case, par.

I think it's great finishing. I think the last four holes are great, 15, 16, 17, 18, I think a lot can happen in those last four holes, and I think it's a great setup and finishing holes.

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