

Aramco Saudi Ladies International Presented by Public Investment Fund

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King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf & Country Club

Chiara Noja

Quick Quotes

Q. You've been a professional golfer now for five months. What has changed in your day-to-day life in that period?

CHIARA NOJA: Definitely more professional in the sense that I do everything with a lot more accuracy. So whenever I go practice, it's not about constantly hitting quantity. It's about chasing percentages and less about doing stock drills and stock practice. Just trying to understand myself a little better and getting better at the things I get better at.

Q. You've had a little while since your last pro start in the Aramco Team Series. How would you reflect on the start to your professional career?

CHIARA NOJA: I learned a lot at this event last year. It's a really cool experience for it to be my first event this year. It's a different game, especially on the courses like this, where when the wind blows, it can get really difficult shooting under par.

Just keeping my head down and just working my way through the golf course and not letting scores or like bad shots or good shots distract me too much.

Q. Just following on from that, is there anything in particular you think you've excelled in since turning professional and anything that you think you need to work on to reach that next level?

CHIARA NOJA: Starting holes. I think most of the holes sometimes, I still get a little scared of them. My dad always says -- actually, no, I'm not going to say what my dad says (laughter).

Yeah, just making sure that, if I do have a shot that doesn't necessarily look approachable or easy, that I don't just sort of go the other way. Sometimes if there's water on the left, I'll block it right a little bit. Just sort of commit. It's something that I've improved on a lot over the last few months and years. It's something that I need to keep on improving.



Q. Your dad's your caddie, would I be right saying that?

CHIARA NOJA: Yes.

Q. Playing this course for the third time in a short span, what do you like about Royal Greens? Is it a course that suits your eye?

CHIARA NOJA: Growing up like -- I grew up in England, so not that much water there. So getting used to the view of the ocean or the coast is a little terrifying sometimes, but it's a beautiful golf course. The conditions are exquisite.

I remember when I played my first practice round, I was like damn, I remember this being nice, but this is super nice. So you just get spoiled a little bit when you're here. Everything is sort of pristine condition. Food is amazing. It's just amazing to be back here.

Q. The golf course itself, does it suit your style of play?

CHIARA NOJA: I don't know, to be honest. I don't know. I feel like I'm a long hitter, so I usually have a distance advantage. I always sort of find that I get my distance advantage on tight, shorter golf courses because, if other players are having to lay up with a wood or something and I get to have an iron in hand, that's where I come through.

But it's a golf course that I definitely feel very comfortable playing. With the right strategy in place, it's very scorable.

Q. You had a superb finish to your second round last time out in this tournament. How much confidence did that give you, especially after just turning professional?

CHIARA NOJA: Hmm, confidence. I mean, a good score always feels good, but at the end of the day, it's golf. You can play 6-under one day and shoot 4-over the next. There's nothing that says I played well today, I'm going to play well this time.

So I sort of went in not expecting too much. I knew first start of the season, little rusty still. You know, just play

golf, not try to stress out too much. But it was a really good experience getting a good result out here.

Q. You're obviously playing -- I don't know if this is outdated. You're obviously playing with some of the biggest names in the ladies game again this week. Does it feel a bit surreal playing with the stars, or is it just a case of focusing on your game and the week ahead?

CHIARA NOJA: I played with Lindsey today, and she was absolutely lovely. She's an LPGA girl. I did ask her a lot of questions. I asked her for some advice and her opinions on things. So just talking to players like that is really awesome. They are an inspiration. I look up, and that's where I want to be at some point in my career.

So it's a really cool experience, and seeing the biggest names in golf is always a little jaw-dropping.

Q. When you meet an LPGA player like that, what do you tend to ask?

CHIARA NOJA: I asked her a lot about courses, some of the players she probably knows. I asked her quite a bit about Nelly Korda.

Q. You did?

CHIARA NOJA: Of course I did. Just some experience things, how are the courses? How are the girls? What is it like? Are the girls like super smiley? Are they super competitive? Just something that I want to get used to and something I want to make myself more aware of.

Q. Have you set yourself any targets for this week?

CHIARA NOJA: No. I'm going to be 100 percent honest, no. The only targets I have are mental. So I just want to, even if I'm not having a good day or even if I'm having a great day, I just want to focus on myself, keep my head down, shoot my scores, and just keep my own mind and focus on the process rather than outcome.

Of course I want to win. Of course I want to play amazing golf. Of course I want to perform. But setting little intermediate targets.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years time and then ten years time?

CHIARA NOJA: Oh, gosh.

Q. That's a big question.

CHIARA NOJA: Five years, 21 and 26. That's where I see myself.

Q. I think he wants more than that.

CHIARA NOJA: It was my birthday yesterday.

Q. Happy birthday.

CHIARA NOJA: Thank you. So this is a little difficult for me to answer. I guess LPGA, hopefully World No. 1. That's the goal. That's the basic, very straightforward answer, and everyone still says it but I believe in that and I want to make it come true.

Q. So World No. 1 by age of 21?

CHIARA NOJA: We'll say 21, yeah. That works.

Q. Five years later than that.

CHIARA NOJA: Still World No. 1 (laughter).

Q. Why not? Absolutely. What does this year's schedule look like for you?

CHIARA NOJA: Hopefully I'll be able to play in the other Aramco events. That's something I really look forward to playing. So we'll see how that develops. But with COVID, everything's a little up in the air still. I've got my next event will be Terre Blanche on the LET Access, so that's what I have.

We'll have to see what comes up, what fits my school schedule as well. An exciting season ahead.

Q. Is Q-School in the cards at the end of this year, or will you still be too young?

CHIARA NOJA: I think I'll be able to go to Q-School. I think 16, I will be able to go. Hopefully I won't have to. Hopefully I'll secure a nice little title this year. That would be good.

Q. Tell us about your opening round. You said you were 1-under par?

CHIARA NOJA: Yeah, 1-under par for today. Started on hole 10. A little shaky at the beginning. A little unsure of myself, a little unsure of the wind. It was very windy. I think it was 14 kilometres an hour this morning. Committing to some of those shots is a little difficult. I went 3-over from 10 to 18.

The front nine, my back nine, I went 4-under. So it was definitely a grind. My dad and I, we just went the entire time, you know what, hit your shot, commit to it. We don't care what you shoot. We knew it was going to be tough out here today. 1-under is always nice.

Q. Absolutely. Not a lot of low scoring today. Same kind of game plan for tomorrow, just go out and just commit?

CHIARA NOJA: Same thing. Just focusing on myself, focusing on the process. First step or first achievement will be the cut, and then I'll move on from there.

Q. Did you do anything for your birthday yesterday?

CHIARA NOJA: Actually, I had about 20 iced teas (laughter). We did go through a little process of trying to find me a birthday cake. So we ordered room service, and they were like sorry, we don't have any cake, but we do have French toast. So I had French toast. I was like do you have a candle? Nope, safety hazard. No candle for me. When I get back to Dubai, I'll celebrate with my family.

Q. So your birthday cake was a couple of slices of French toast?

CHIARA NOJA: Yes.

Q. Was it nice?

CHIARA NOJA: It was delicious, highly recommend.

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