

# Women's Olympic Golf Competition

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Le Golf National

## Gaby Lopez

## Maria Fassi

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Honoured to have Team México in the press centre. Gaby, third Olympics here. Maria, this is your second consecutive one.

Gaby, start with you. Just seeing the progression of golf in the Olympics, kind of what we've seen it grow to and how excited are you for this week?

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, I'm super excited. I've seen the progression go super fast. In Rio 2016, we had a good crowd but this weekend for the guys, I think we had humongous crowds and seeing so many people, so many young people in golf, kids, girls and boys following their idols, like we once followed. It's very cool to see how they are getting so inspired by us and especially the kids. I'm very excited to tee it up for Team México in this third Olympics.

THE MODERATOR: In Tokyo, you don't have a chance to do much but already you've had a chance to see gymnastics and swimming and track. Talk about the experience.

MARIA FASSI: It's such an honour, especially I've stayed in the Village last few days and just getting to watch how they train, how they prepare, being embarrassed at the gym. I'm a weak person, and you have somebody lifting four or five times as much as you, and then seeing that and kind of it to their sports and watching them compete. It's been so much fun.

I had the honour to talk to Simone Biles at the Village a couple days ago. It was so cool and humbling to know she's a regular person like me even though she can be whatever she wanted to be. It's great.

Tokyo was a phenomenal experience for me but being able to have fans out and our families and friends and people that have come to support us this week, it's a privilege.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about how much it means playing for your country.

GABY LOPEZ: For sure, having so many kids involved, it truly changes your lives. I was 25 years ago watching all these amazing golfers, and being able to be a little bit of inspiration to their lives, and potentially get them to dream big, get them to dream of being Rory McIlroy, Nelly Korda, world No. 1, it's an honour.

Overall I think this opportunity for us as México, golf is not too big in México and very few people can relate to a major championship but everyone can relate to a Gold Medal and Silver and Bronze Medal. Having that opportunity to inspire them to get involved with the sports because sports at the end of the day, it's a different and amazing experience by a big education for everyone. All the values that sport gives, you integrity, honesty, commitment to yourself, commitment to work hard in your life, it's such a lifestyle, being able to have that opportunity and have kids moved more and more in sports especially in México, I think it's huge. And how to dream big, and why not to dream of an Olympic Medal.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think for us, Lorena has been huge. But even for the guys, I know for a fact that Abraham, he's like, I didn't even play golf if it weren't for Lorena; she's that one that, like, I want to do that. Yeah, the power and we have the platform to give back to our country and give back to the green. Just to know we have the platform to give back to our country; being to three Olympic Games myself, it's such a privilege, and for me, any time that we get to do it while in Mexican colours is even better.

**Q. What was it about Lorena that you wanted to, that drew you in; that you wanted to live up to?**

GABY LOPEZ: For me, it's more the person than the player. She truly is that woman that inspires you by the way she is and about the way -- of course the way she played. But if you really get to know her, she's probably one of the most humble, fierce players you get to know.



Here on tour, a lot of the girls really miss her because the way she treated people. She treated people as human beings and she took the time to talk to the grounds keeper. She would have lunch with them, and that's something that I have tried to carry on on tour. It's kind of taking into consideration en, especially the groundskeepers in the U.S. that pretty much they are Mexicans and they are Latins.

It's just really cool to see how the way she is off the golf course translates also into the golf course. Seeing that competitor but still that humble person is just truly inspirational and she's someone that I want to look up to. I still talk to her and have a great relationship with her. She still is very in touch with us.

MARIA FASSI: I think it's pretty much the same for me. I always say Lorena is a way better person than she was a golfer, and that's saying a lot.

Again, it's all the little things. It's making sure that her legacy is not only remembered by at mounts of majors she won or the trophies but the impact that she had on people. I mean, since the first day I met her, again, she's the reason I didn't play this game, since I seven, when I met her to now 20 years later. She's just getting better and better.

Like Gaby is saying, the more you get to know her, the more you realise just how humble and kind she is. Yeah, it's just a privilege and an honour to have her as a mentor and friend.

**Q. Carlos was in here a week ago, and I think I'm paraphrasing, but he said something of 2 percent of the population in México will watch the U.S. Open, but 98 percent will watch the Olympics.**

MARIA FASSI: A hundred percent. Like I said before, very few people can relate to the British Open, the U.S. Open. The whole of México can relate to a Gold Medal or any medal or the Olympics. Just being able to represent our country, it just touches so many lives, not only as golfers but also my friends that have nothing to do with golf, or just people that they are random -- I think I've come across a couple of Mexicans here in different disciplines that we've been watching, and don't even know what sport I play. But just the fact that I'm wearing green, white and red, for them, they are so pumped up.

It's awesome to see how people are so passionate about representing México, wherever it is, whatever you're doing. I think that's the biggest goal, being able to just change lives by acting and behaving as a professional.

**Q. What would be the order of the most important sporting events in México and where would the Olympics in terms of the attention that the country would pay to it, where does the Olympics rank and what's up there with the Olympics?**

GABY LOPEZ: I think, and I would say, I'm guilty of it, too, I never watch a diving competition, but you bet if México is in the Olympics and we have people competing, like I'm watching regardless of what I'm doing.

The Olympics, you don't know what's happening in the sports a lot of times but you're watching it when we have a countryman representing and supporting. Yeah, soccer is the most popular game, sport in México.

But I think when it comes to the Olympics, it doesn't matter. Like you have every single sole in México is sending us good vibes and wants us to bring back as many medals as possible as a whole delegation. It's not like, oh, we won a medal in soccer because that's the sport we care about. I think they just want to see México climb that medal leaderboard as much and as far as we can.

MARIA FASSI: I think we are really big in archery, diving, judo. Recently we had a Silver Medal. It's a matter of scratching into every discipline, every sport, and you will find a Mexican. It's just a matter of time. A lot of people ask us, hey, what does México need.

To me, it's like we need just time and more experience. Because we don't have that many sports people that are like just practising it, like a lot of the support that the U.S. gets for México, we don't have that big infrastructure. So the very few Mexicans that get to play and they do it very well, I think they deserve a huge round of applause regarding what players they are, because we have a very small population practising a lot of sports.

**Q. You have a Mexican in fencing.**

GABY LOPEZ: Yes.

**Q. This is tricky but we've heard from different players who have been in the Village, especially in the European countries, that they will run into other athletes who want to talk golf. Have you had that happen?**

GABY LOPEZ: Yeah, especially I know tennis players love golf. I know a lot of the swimmers love golf. I feel like a lot of athletes, once they retire, just love to compete, and I feel like golf on a recreational level is pretty easy on your body compared to maybe other sports or things that they have done in the past.

But yet, they are still competitive and kind of -- yet to go away. They still want to celebrate and feel some sort of adrenaline. I think golf is a great sport for some of those people to compete and to do. I think it was Andy Murray was saying, oh, I might turn pro and see how it goes on golf, you know what I mean.

I think it's just -- it's growing so much and I think golf is getting gaining a lot of popularity and it's becoming a lot more cool to know how to play golf and to support golfers. I think the game is evolving in a way that's more welcoming and friendly for other people.

Yeah, I've had a couple encounters, actually, run into Tommy and Taylor the other day in the Village -- I hear you guys on the golf course, that's so cool, I wish I could play golf. I'm like, I wish I could play tennis.

I think for me, that's been the best experience is just getting to share that with people at the Village and just kind of have that respect and admiration for each other.

**Q. You haven't met anyone who retired and does judo?**

MARIA FASSI: No, not yet. If you know of someone, Len, and we'll call them crazy together.

GABY LOPEZ: I think the next question has to come in Spanish, and I know you can do it. So come on.

**Q. No es possible.**

GABY LOPEZ: Un poquito.

**Q. I have to think about it first. Piensa del campo?**

GABY LOPEZ: El campo esta en excelente condiciones.

**Q. Everyone answers in English, Gaby?**

GABY LOPEZ: I'll do it in English and I'll do it in Spanish.

I think the golf course, it's such a gem. I don't think people realise what type of golf course we're playing. I think on TV it doesn't do it justice than when you look, when you are actually playing. I think they cut more of the rough for us which makes it tricky because once it's just recently cut, the golf ball kind of sits down and it's not like laying down on the grass.

It's great. The design of the golf course is unbelievable. You have to think a lot off the tee. You have to make some specific plays because downwind, the ball can release a

couple extra yards and you can get into the water hazards.

So you have to hit it very straight off the tee and just kind of give yourself aggressive plays when you have to but I think pars sometimes are going to feel like birdies out here.

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