

NW Arkansas Championship

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Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Maria Fassi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Maria Fassi ahead of the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship Presented by P&G.

Back in Arkansas. Just touch on what it's like to be back.

MARIA FASSI: It's awesome. I mean, obviously for me it's home, so just the little things, getting to sleep in my own bed, my dog getting her own backyard to run around. Little things like that are so special and so rare with how much we're on the road, so for me it's awesome. It's comfort. It's my happy place, so just very happy to be here personally.

And then obviously on the golf side it's one of my favorite stops on tour if not my favorite stop on Tour. I think everybody that plays gets to experience a little bit of what I call home so it's a fun week as well to get to show some of the people my favorite restaurants and just kind of maybe invite them over to my house and be a host. Yeah, a lot of fun. Grateful to be here.

Q. Dow and P&G, some of your sponsors are spearheading the sustainability effort for this tournament. Can you speak on that and what it's like to be part of it?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, it's very cool to see two companies that obviously are huge on the science side of things. You wouldn't necessarily kind of tie them with sports, but yet they find a way to incorporate sport in what they do. I feel like it's such a good way to showcase what they do to get people to learn a little bit more about sustainability and different ways in our everyday life we can care for the planet, our waste, and also learn just all the products that both companies kind of have working together. I just think it's very interesting.

I've just walked past the sustainability showcase like forum they have on the 18th fairway. It's just cool. You know, like I think it's something different than what we usually see on a golf course. I like to learn new things, so for me it was kind of cool just to learn a couple things even today.

So I encourage people to try and go out and do the same.

Q. Another project that's kind of close to your heart is Fassi's Friends. Speak to what that means to you and why it's so important to you.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, for me giving back was always something I wanted to do in my career. I decided to do it early in my career because I wanted it to be something that grew alongside my career.

I feel like usually you see people start their foundations on the tail end of their career. For me it was kind of like a fun challenge to see, hey, it's my first or second year out on Tour. What can we do? How can we make this great?

Each year having to get bigger and having us be able to impact more and more families, it's amazing and humbling. Obviously it's something that's very close to my heart.

Starting it here in Arkansas was a perfect place to do it. It's what I call home now. People make me feel like I'm home here. It's my way of giving back and paying it forward for the next generation to hopefully see many more kids playing golf and many more kids that, you know, maybe felt like the golf course wasn't a safe place for them to feel differently and feel included and part of something bigger.

Q. And then earlier today, another former Arkansas Razorback --

MARIA FASSI: I'm going to cry. Don't do that.

Q. -- retired. Can you speak to what Stacy Lewis has meant to you in your career?

MARIA FASSI: No, I can't. I mean, it's amazing. She's just the perfect role model that anybody could ask for. Yeah, I'm just very happy I got to share six amazing years on the golf course with her playing professionally. Obviously partnering with Dow for five of those.

Just getting to learn from her. She's one of the smartest people I know. She's crazy smart when it comes to the golf swing, to golf management. The amount of things I learned from her the last few years has been something

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that I don't think I'll ever be able to thank her enough for her time, for her just the amount of care that she has towards me.

It's amazing, and, yeah, I'll miss having our Tuesday practice rounds together and stuff like that. Like I tell her, now that she's no longer a full-time employee of anything for the foreseeable future, I'm going to be bothering her a little bit more. She's going to hear a lot from me. Hopefully I can go out and see her in College Station and have her come here to Arkansas or somewhere else.

But I know I'm going to see a lot of her in the future. Yeah, just like I said, I'm extremely grateful that I got share life on Tour with her.

Q. So you're one of quite a few Razorbacks competing. How does it make you feel to have a lot of representation here in Northwest Arkansas especially since the school is just down the road?

MARIA FASSI: It's awesome. For me even when I was in school, it was always a tournament to look forward to, whether I was playing in it or whether one of my teammates got the exemption to play in it.

It's just so cool to see it grow from 2016 the first time that I was here to now. Like it feels like it's is completely different tournament, yet it hasn't lost its values and just the core of it stays the same.

I think it's just such a great way to showcase Arkansas women's golf. It's such an amazing opportunity for the college players to get to compete here.

And then also like I know Kendall, this is going to be her first professional start, and I was talking to her earlier. You know, like it can't get much better than that.

So it's just such an amazing opportunity that we have here. I think having the support of the whole town will never get old.

Q. Does this tournament feel any different now knowing this will be Stacy's last tournament and your last to get to play with her?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I found out about her retiring a few months ago so I've kind of have been mourning this, you know, for a little while, which is good. Because I think -- and she knew that maybe I needed a little extra time to process the whole thing before we got to this week.

So, yeah, I mean, I think it's just so cool that -- and I keep telling her, it's so cool she gets to announce it here.

Everything started here for her 19 years ago, and just to be able to call it out here is just so special.

For me like I'm just happy that I get to share it with her, you know. Like getting to practice with her, getting talk with her, try to learn a little more on the last few weeks that I have.

And like I said, I'm not going to see her week in and week out but I know she's only a phone call away.

Q. Course knowledge is big for you here. What parts of your game are you really happy with right now and is there a part you would like to see get better this week?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think my iron play has gotten significantly better with the last few months and being able to get a few more reps under pressure has I think really helped with that.

I think my short game as well has improved the last few months working with a couple new people that have really helped me and just seeing golf in a slightly different manner.

I would like to see just kind of being a little more consistent off the tee. Today in the pro-am I felt good, but that was definitely something that I've been struggling with the last few weeks.

So, yeah, just hopefully trying to hit ten plus fairways every day, I think it's going to set me up in a position to attack, have fun, go at some pins and hopefully get the birdies rolling.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Maria.

MARIA FASSI: Thank you.

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