

The Chevron Championship

Thursday, April 20, 2023

The Woodlands, Texas, USA

The Club at Carlton Woods

Marina Alex

Quick Quotes

Q. 4-under first round at the Chevron Championship. What were some of the highlights of your round today and what was working in your game?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, I putted really nicely today. I think that the first two holes, I didn't hit either green. They're long and they're tough holes, and I made two really good up-and-downs, and I think that kind of got me going, good momentum in the right direction.

Birdied both the par-5s on the front and one of the par-3s, so I think kind of just started rolling in the right direction. And I made a lot of nice par saves at the end when I needed to.

Got away with one really not that great shot that turned into a birdie, and then I had a really nice shot on a par-3, but it was tough for me to stop it on the green and I ended up being in a difficult lie and took a bogey from there and didn't really have a lot of options to play from.

Overall patient, but I think it's going to be a good test of golf throughout the week. This is a nice golf course, it's tough. The greens are pretty firm.

For me coming in with some longer clubs maybe relative to the rest of the field, it requires me to work pretty hard and be strategic about what I'm doing.

Q. One of the things we heard throughout the early part of the week is this is a bomber's golf course. Now, you're not short, but --

MARINA ALEX: I'm not. I'm not a bomber.

Q. What is it about this that makes this work?

MARINA ALEX: You know, today I think that -- I made some really nice par putts when I hit good shots, and I just -- I was over the green and there was really not a lot I could do about that.

I'm hoping that I can just continue to stay patient in that



and maybe there will be a few more accessible hole locations for the clubs that I'm hitting in as the next three days goes on.

I'm going to try not to worry too much about that because I can't worry about how far I hit the ball off the tee, so I just need to handle that as it comes.

The par-5s I can -- whether I'm wedging it or whether I can get it on the green in two, I think for the most part that's pretty level for the field.

So I take advantage of those when I can and make sure my wedges are tight. That's how I'm going to have to play out here for my game.

Q. For the average fan who tunes in and is accustomed to seeing a 7- or 8- or 9-under round out here and they see 4-under leading, what would you tell them about the golf course?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, I think if you miss in the wrong places the up-and-downs become really challenging. The bunker are super deep. The sand texture doesn't afford you a lot of spin out of the bunker, so you're hitting from a very deep bunker to an elevated green. It's hard to get the ball close, and there are plenty of bunkers out here.

I think that whoever manages their approach game correctly, trying to get it into the right sections of the greens, trying to avoid the miss error that will likely cost you a bogey, and that's championship golf in a nutshell, is really plotting your way around and trying to make as few unforced errors as possible.

Q. How would you kind of assess the year so far and how you felt about things coming into this week?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, it's been kind of a weird year. I just feel like I've got off to some really slow starts. Hilton Grand Vacations, Singapore, those were my first two weeks. I didn't get off to great starts, and luckily I had four rounds to play and I kind of worked through it.

But even similarly in Drive On in Arizona and Palos



Verdes, I just felt like I put myself behind the ball early, and actually last week I had a really nice start for like my first 12 holes. Got off to a good start and then I just completely like tanked it after that.

I ended up -- I played the weekend, whatever. I didn't get off to a good start, but I kind of was like -- in the back of my mind I'm like, there's a little bit of good momentum there. Let's just try and carry that into this week.

I got off to a nice start again and I was just trying to improve upon that and really like close out a solid round today, which I did, and I was really happy with. I'm going to try and just keep building off of that. I'm not a very quick starter out of the season.

It takes me a few competitive rounds to kind of get into a groove, and I'm like fifth week on the road, and it's a little tiring, but I kind of need that to get mentally competitively sharp.

Q. Has it always been that way?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah. I mean, it's just how I -- I don't know what it is. It's really hard to simulate competition without being in competition, and some players do it much better than others. They come out of an off-season and they're just like guns hot, ready to roll.

I've just never really been that way and it frustrates me and I can lose patience with that and I get discouraged and I get a little anxious about it, but it always ends up finding its groove at some point or another. So even after 10 years I'm still learning those lessons.

Q. Was it hard to balance finding that groove, going into to Hawai'i, versus the length you traveled coming back there to here ahead of the major?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, it was tough going to Hawai'i, but there was benefit to doing it. Like I was just explaining, for the first time all year I had an under-par round to start an event versus a par or over-par round. It was -- as crazy as it sounds, it definitely helped in some way. The end result of Hawai'i wasn't -- it was okay. It was fine. But just those little things can really make a difference.

Q. Do you have any thoughts coming into the week about how a strong performance here at Chevron could correlate to moving up the Solheim Cup rankings?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, we're always thinking about that. I feel like every European and American player within the Solheim year, they're stressed and they're trying to do their

best to make that team, and I know how important that is.

But you know, it's one tournament at a time and there is a lot of time between now and then. Regardless of however this week pans out, there's still plenty of opportunities.

Q. How important is it for you?

MARINA ALEX: It is important. I definitely want to be back there playing another Solheim. I feel pretty good physically, so I just want my game to kind of highlight that, and I'm hoping that this is like a good start of a good stretch of golf coming up.

Q. You mentioned you converted some pretty tough up-and-downs and you made some quality putts. I take it you're not really surprised that there's not many minus 4s right now?

MARINA ALEX: Yeah, I mean, you know, it's really hard to say. We've never been here before, and that's kind of the beauty of a brand-new venue. You can play practice rounds and everyone can speculate on what the course might be, but it really -- you don't know until we're all out there kind of out there playing. There were some tough pins. The greens are not that easy, so if you're in the wrong section or if you're chipping from the wrong area, you have a lot of slope to kind of work with and have to navigate, and then you also -- the greens are pretty quick in certain places.

It doesn't surprise me that there aren't more low scores. I think there could be a lower scoring if the wind doesn't pick up and we get the same weather for the afternoon and no storms roll in, I could definitely see someone shooting 4, 5, 6, for sure. It just depends on how many putts are holed.

Q. Like you said, though, new course and nobody really knows what to expect. If you kind of thought what the winner's score could be?

MARINA ALEX: No, I try really not to just not even go there because weather can change, conditions can change, tees, different pins. Like anything can happen. Someone could just get hot. You may be like oh, this is a tough course, and there's a million players that could shoot 9-under at that point. It's just anyone can get hot enough to go low out here. That's how talented all of the field is.

I think it's kind of silly to put a number on it.

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