

Golf Channel Media Conference

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Brandt Packer

Lisa Cornwell

Maria Fassi

Jennifer Kupcho

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Thank you everybody for joining this conference call late this afternoon. Much appreciated. We're here to preview the NCAA Women's and Men's Golf Championships; Women's Golf Championship starts Friday at the Blessings in Arkansas, as everybody knows.

So Lisa and Brandt, we'll touch on this a little bit more, but for us at Golf Channel, this is a labor of love for us. We've been airing the Men's Golf Championships since 2014 and the Women's since 2015. It's a big passion project for a lot of us here at the network.

I hope everybody on here received our press release that we issued this afternoon. It has air times and probably more info than you need on everything that we're doing the next couple of weeks. With that, this call is being transcribed, so you all will receive transcripts of the call after we're done.

First I would like to introduce Lisa Cornwell and Brandt Packer. Lisa, I know she's really excited about this being an Arkansas alum and the first women's golfer to receive a golf scholarship at Arkansas.

Lisa, if you can just share your thoughts, excitement on going back home and covering the NAAs for us this year.

LISA CORNWELL: Well, first of all, thank you. It's I guess surreal I would say. It's hard to believe it's been so long. I got an email from the athletics department a month or so ago. Jeri was on the call and she can appreciate this, because Jeri was there when I was in school. You know, it was such a weird time for me.

But to think back to those days and to getting that program going and, you know, women's golf was really just starting to take off across the country. You had your established programs, right? So when I was in school it was you Arizona States; Miami was a

powerhouse back then; Tulsa. To see the evolution and to really be able to watch it now through Golf Channel's eyes and be able to cover it, not only just watch the enormous growth in these programs, but the talent level. We saw with what we saw ANWA. Two of our players who are on the call today, Jennifer and Maria, were absolutely fantastic.

It's a true honor and a privilege for me to be involved. I can't tell you what college golf means to me and what women's college golf means to me. I can't tell you what you what the University of Arkansas and Fayetteville means to me. To be able to host it at a course that I don't know as well, but I know Johnny Tyson, and I know the labor of love that it's been and I know how important this is to him. To know what Tyson Foods has done for Arkansas, what Johnny continues to do for the golf programs, both men and women, and the pride that he has to have this at this golf course that's a true championship venue that they have tweaked and altered and done everything they can to make to a true championship test.

It is, it's gorgeous. But it's a challenge. So I can't wait to watch these highly skilled student athletes compete. I can't wait to watch them tackling The Blessing like they tackled August National just with the talent that they have. And, yeah, I'll be prideful as not just a Fayetteville native and University of Arkansas long-time supporter and what you mentioned in terms of helping start the program, but also just a fan of women's golf and golf in general. It's going to be a fantastic week.

And then to also follow it up next week with the men, I mean, I'll have a lot of pride watching that, but watching the ladies and showcasing it in Fayetteville is really going to be one the highlights of the things that I've been able to cover in my professional career.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Thanks for joining us, Lisa. Brandt, you talked about this before. This is one of your favorite events to produce each year. You're there on the ground in Arkansas, so paint us a picture of how excited you are for the next couple of weeks.

BRANDY PACKER: I've said it for six years on the men's side and five years now on the women's side. It's the best two weeks in golf. I'm really proud of what we've all accomplished at Golf Channel. Now having

50 live tournament hours of college and amateur golf, which is the most of any network and to be able to broadcast five collegiate events I think is really powerful.

Gives us a chance to meet these student athletes early on in their careers and to get to know them and watch them grow. I mean, last year it was funny. I'm sure Jennifer and Maria can appreciate this. When Stanford lost and Bob Popa right away said, The Shannon Obear era is over. It kind of hit us. Wait a minute. We've all grown up with these guys as well.

I was just in Athens on Monday watching the men's regional and I saw Patrick Martin and Will Gordon, both seniors from Vanderbilt, and said the same thing. What are you guys, 29, 30? How old are you guys now? We were all kind of joking about it.

I think the collegiate game and especially the women's amateur game is in such an incredible place. I had a great privilege of producing the August National Women's Amateur. When the invitations went out we weren't quite sure what the field would be. As we kept getting the results, we said wait a minute, we know 80, 85 percent of these players already. We've covered them.

And then the way it unfolded on the second nine was just magical. You know, Lisa can say the same thing. We're not really allowed to root, but if you said, Hey, we get a rematch right now on that Monday for the individual, and late on Wednesday I'm pretty of sure every golf fan in the United States would sign up for that.

One last thing about those two, and I know we'll talk to them shortly, but the cool thing about those two was as great as they played on the course, I think it was even more powerful of how awesome they are in their sportsmanship. I've had so many people that don't really play the game and don't -- aren't into the game that watched that and said, Man, those two were high fiving. Looked like they were genuinely into it and friends. That's the way the game should be played.

My daughter right off the bat, she watched every second. I'm not an autograph person. I've probably asked for two autographs my life. I won't tell you who they are. It's embarrassing. I reached out right away to Kim and Shauna and said, I need a favor. I need you all to get those two to write my daughter an autograph. And you know what? I need one, too.

So their note is sitting right in front of where I look in my office, and it's one the proudest things that I own. So I can't wait for this to get started.

LISA CORNWELL: I mean, a lot of us have been involved in this, and I know Beth Ann is on this call as well and so many different people that cover this game nationally and cover it at the amateur level. I mean, what you're talking about, Brandt in just watching that, the sportsmanship was incredible, but what I was so intrigued by -- and, look, we've watched it over the years because we've seen college golf up close. People pay attention to the sportsmanship, but you get the respect from playing well.

I heard so many people like, Oh, they're going to play this golf course a week before the Masters and it's absolutely going to slaughter them. So I am sitting there like a little kid just watching these girls make birdies. Wasn't just Maria and Jennifer. It was the field.

The talent level to me is what is so impressive. I think it's our duty and it's really been our privilege to be able to showcase this. On the LPGA Tour you want people to pay attention, but you put the eyeballs on the August National, and hopefully they'll be paying attention at The Blessing. It's another difficult golf course.

I want people to watch every single year and appreciate the talent. That's what we show in college golf. We've seen it from the shots that we've seen over the years, especially the last few years. I think about the dynamics in Oregon with Washington. I think about Northwestern powering through; I think about Arizona last year. I mean, these ladies are incredibly talented.

For us to be able to showcase it and then now we have two key figures with Jennifer and Maria to be able to be the standard bearers out there, it's really just a great combination this year of everything that has been fantastic about the women's amateur game that is bleeding over into professional as well.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Jennifer and Maria, how about that buildup? Lisa and Brandt, thank you. Jennifer and Maria, we'll turn it over to you all for some opening comments.

Jennifer, we'll start with you. Reigning defending individual champion; Augusta National Women's Amateur champion.

Both you and Maria, this is your last collegiate event. Share your thoughts going into this week and your preparations as well as taking final exams and finishing school.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, so actually I finished final exams right before regionals, so I've been done for a little bit. But coming in as the defending champ and coming in with my team, I think I'm just really excited to

get out there and play one last event representing my school. Hopefully make it to match play and see what we can do.

But obviously I went home between regionals and nationals; worked a little bit with my swing coach and focused on getting my game where it needed to be. We'll see how we go play as a team and how I play individually.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Maria, so this is a culmination of -- this is the big reason why you came back your senior year was to play at the national championship at your home course. Tell us your thoughts and preparations going into this week.

MARIA FASSI: Well, first of all, I mean, I want to thank all of you guys for joining in and for taking the time to do this, for supporting women's golf and collegiate golf and all that. I appreciate it.

I'm just kind of on the same page as Jennifer. I'm really excited for this week. I know it's going to be my last tournament wearing the Razor Backs colors, last amateur tournament, so this really means a lot to me. Of course like having it at home and with our people and our friends and our staff, just our home course, I mean, that just means so much more.

I think I put in all the work that I can. Ever since we found out that we were going to host nationals we been working towards this week. Regionals was really stressing for all of us just because we I guess had that little extra pressure of coming back to nationals and hosting nationals and getting to play at home.

So we were really all relieved after we got through regionals. Even though we might've not played our very best golf, we did what we had to do. We finished inside top 6 and we're here this week. I mean, I think the team is in a great space. Our team's chemistry is probably a good as it's ever been.

I'm really excited to share this one last tournament with the girls. It's nice that I have people like Jennifer who I enjoy playing with and love competing against, and I know it's going to be a really fun week for us. I hope that we can put up a show like we did at Augusta a few weeks back.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Thanks, ladies. So we will open it up for questions.

Q. Jennifer, could you maybe describe a little bit what your relationship has been like with Maria? Secondly, I know you probably tried to get as much data on The Blessing that you can in the interim two weeks and what you found out about the

difficulty level of the course.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, so me and Maria, I've kind of known her since she started coming to Colorado back when she was younger to try and qualify for USGA events. So we've kind of known each other since back then.

But I think our friendship really started this year at the Palmer Cup. Kind of since then we've got through Q-School and obviously at Augusta, and our friendship just got way stronger. It's just been great since then.

What was the other part of your question? I forget. Sorry.

Q. I was asking what type of data you might have found out about The Blessing and the difficulty level here.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Yeah, so my assistant coach obviously looked at the course a little bit. Still haven't heard a whole bunch since I haven't been at school. We'll go over the course more tonight.

I mean, I probably could have asked Maria, but I doubt she's going to give me a whole lot of information on it. Kind of just going at it. I play courses pretty well blind, so I'm not too worried about it.

Q. This is for Maria speaking about the course. A lot of times the facility that you have to kind of work on your game day in and day out shapes you as a player. I understand the Blessing is really not an easy course. You're a long hitter, but I don't think it's someplace you can just so bomb it. Talk about how having that course to play on every day has shaped your game?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think this course fits all like parts of your game. I feel like you have some holes where you can just rip it and fairways are pretty wide and stuff, but then hitting into some of those greens can be tricky. There can be some weird pin locations where, yeah, it's just hard to hit it close.

So definitely being able to practice at a course like this that demands so much and requires being present and precision, being very disciplined as well, has helped me a lot. Definitely shaped my game and has helped me grow.

I don't know. It's a really nice test. I enjoy how it can be hard sometimes, but at the same time there are some holes where you can just go get. So it's pretty fair golf course. It's always in really good shape. It's nice to have a course like that to practice on every day.

Of course for this championship I know it's going to be in the best shape I've ever seen it. I'm very excited for

not only us to play, but for people around the country and have players from all over the world come and see what we have here and enjoy the course as much as I enjoy it.

Q. Hi, ladies. This is Beth Ann. Thank is for both Jennifer and Maria. Just curious how the ANWA has elevated your profile as a player, and maybe there is a story or two of maybe folks recognizing you out in public or something fun like that where you can tell the exposure made a difference.

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I'll go. Yeah, I mean, obviously we've gotten a lot of publicity, and I think really to get that kind of attention it has definitely been hard to get used to it. But it's definitely helped us -- well at least me -- to really get my name out there and get the support from everyone around the country and the world. Going into the LPGA we're going to need that kind of support when we first start.

I guess probably one of the main stories I have is I got recognized by the city that I live in for my accomplishment. I think that was really just a big thing just because golf isn't really a big thing in Colorado. To get recognized by my city, like it's something that was very unheard of until it happened.

Q. Is there a Jennifer Kupcho Day?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I don't think it's a Jennifer Kupcho Day, but, yes, I did get recognized.

Q. I love it. (Laughter.) Maria?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think definitely helped us, like Jennifer said, just put our names out not only as golfers, because I feel like we -- I mean, if you talk to people who know about golf they know who Jennifer and I were even of before the tournament.

I feel like what was really special about Augusta is we showed the world what we really stand for and our values and our sportsmanship. We showed our friendship and love for the game, and I think that means a lot more than a 65.

I think that what we showcased out there was really powerful. Like Jennifer said, it's going to be really powerful for us now that we're moving on to professional golf. I'm just very excited that I get to start my professional career with a friend like her.

We're going to be out there alone from time to time, and it's good to have familiar faces and to have good relationships like the one Jennifer and I have. I'm very excited we've gotten a lot closer and that people have seen that other side of us. Not only that we're great golfers, but that we're amazing people as well.

It's pretty exciting to see that people are valuing that, and I think we've earned a lot of people's respect because of how we behaved. So I'm very excited to keep doing that, and hopefully Jennifer and I can do this for a long time now.

Q. I had a question for Lisa, kind of a two-parter. Who would you say are maybe four or five teams you would label as favorites to make match play, teams that have the mojo going into this? And the second part, when you guys were here at The Blessing a few weeks ago, there was this kind of wink-wink about how difficult the course can be. Can you and Brandt discuss what you know of that?

LISA CORNWELL: I think Maria would be a good person. I have not played the golf course since they made the changes. I can tell you this, and Maria hit on it. It really doesn't favor -- like, you know, Zoysia grass can be tricky. We were just talking to Maria about the fact that there hasn't been a lot of rain in Northwest Arkansas.

So from that standpoint you think, okay, length could be advantageous on that kind of golf course, especially with the Zoysia fairways. Now, not having the rain kind of helped. They're careful about protecting and preserving the fairways. I don't think it favors the right player left to right. I think it's a golf course with a lot of different dynamics. Maria said it really hits true. It's a precision golf course. At least the times that I've played it.

There are some -- it's one of the courses that kind of tricks you off the tee because you look at it and you're like, wow, there is a lot of room out there. When you get up there there are runoffs, quadrants, certain places where if you short-side yourself you're dead.

I think Maria used the best words. It's a shot-maker's golf course, ball-striker's golf course. Maria can probably touch on this a little bit more. Wouldn't you say it's a ball-striker's golf course?

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I agree with you. I think you have to be able to move tees right to left and left to right. You have some elevated greens, and, yeah, I mean, you have to hit good shots to be in position to make birdies.

I think that's what I liked most about the course, is that it demands a lot from you, but then if you do hit good shots you are going to get rewarded for it.

So it's exciting to see how much has been behind it. I'm just excited for everyone to see the course. Like you said, it's a ball-striker's golf course. I think that's

the most exciting about the course.

Q. In terms of favorites, you could get on here and there is a long list. How can you not be impressed? Look, I think Maria said it really well, the fact that regionals, I cannot imagine the pressure. I almost think once you're there it's like you breathe a sigh of relief. Okay, we finally made it. We saw what happened with the men's team. My heart broke for them. As Brandt said, we don't root for anybody, but you want to see the home team being able to represent.

So, I mean, Jennifer with Wake coming in. I think about what Old Miss has done. And then Duke. I mean, there are so many great storylines. That's the beauty of match play, is that -- and that would actually be my question for Maria, and I know Jennifer would be interested in hearing this.

When you get to match play everything changes. Strategy changes. I know Shauna is really big on course management, and there are certain times where it's okay. I mean, it's okay to miss -- if you know the strategy and how you're playing a golf course you can change things up a little bit.

I mean, I think to me that's the biggest question: How will this golf course play in terms of match play. There is a level of difficulty there I think that teams don't see on a day-to-day basis. Depending on how fast the greens are rolling, where the pins are, that can alter things.

There are teams come in very hot and teams have come in playing exceptionally well, and then you get to a golf course like this and maybe power is less and precision takes over and then the match play element.

So that's the beauty of college golf, and that's the beauty of I think the beauty this championship. I'm a huge fan of match play and I think that's what makes it so compelling. That's what we've seen on air every year since we've done a match play. It's phenomenal. It's great television. It's great championship golf.

BRANDY PACKER: I think what's interesting is that for 72 holes it's all about that low four of your five. You know, so the depth really does come into play.

Then you have Tuesday morning, Tuesday afternoon, and Wednesday is where does that third point come from. That's how you advance. I think what's really neat from the first time we started a concession until now is the depth of the women's game.

I think you had a handful of teams who one through three that were as good as anybody. Now I think you really see where that four and five player, what they can do, and those four and five players right now are really, really good.

I think that's what might separate and fill in some other teams, like a Vanderbilt or a Kent State, you know, what Texas has done, what Florida State has done, to throw in with what we've been talking about Stanford and Arkansas and Wake and Southern Cal. I think the golf course, to me it has a lot of Carson Creek in it from last year.

What I mean by that is a big piece of property, but you hear so many teams. Just heard Brooks Koepka the other day talked about the players that he's eliminated in a major before it even starts. He's like, I know I'll beat 80 of them, and then that leaves me 75 five. I know half the of them will be psyched out. Kind of the thing with Jack Nicklaus. I've had a lot of coaches reach out, and I'm not going to name them, but they've already been psyched out a little bit with this golf course. It's the antithesis of what Eugene Country Club did with the Pacific Northwest layout where the southern teams freaked out and didn't really know how to go up there and play it.

To me, I'll be anxious to see how many teams have lost before they put a peg in the ground because it's a concession, a Carson Creek, where it's in your head versus teams that say, Hey, wait a minute, let's just get the ball in the fairway, get it on the green; this is okay; off we go.

Tomorrow the practice round, I think Thursday is one of my favorite days. I drive around and talk to all the teams and all the coaches. I kind of leave there and get a sense of, wait a minute, I saw four or five teams out there that you can just tell by the questions and their mannerisms that they've already lost before this thing began.

I think it's going to be fascinating. I think The Blessing will play with a lot of team's heads a little bit.

Q. With both of you deferring your LPGA membership, how have you balanced embracing your final year of college golf?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: Well, I mean, obviously we come back to school and we want to have fun and be with our friends, but, I mean, there is nothing you can really do with all the NCAA schools trying to get ready.

So you're just kind of focusing on your game and really focusing on school. I think honestly that was probably one of the easiest parts was to really just dive in and

focus on school and golf and not worry about the rest of the stuff that was going on just because your game does have to be so strong when you turn pro.

So I think that's one little more important thing. Just get your game on that level.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I would agree with Jennifer. I think that with the rules that started last year where you could defer, I feel like it just took something that we would worry about. Like maybe we had our LPGA status. We knew that regardless how we played our college career we were going to have a place to play after we graduate.

So I think at least for me it took a lot of pressure off my shoulders and allowed me to focus on finishing my last semester in school, finishing strong with academics, but at the same time just making golf a priority and staying healthy and staying recovered, and at the same time trying to manage, like Jennifer said, being with your best friends and having fun.

I think at least for me it was kind of hard just to balance everything out because I wanted to go out with my friends, but then at the same time I wanted to wake up early the next morning to go and practice because I knew I wanted to get better. It was just more learning how to balance that collegiate slash professional life.

It's been a lot of fun. I am very excited for this next week, my last week as a collegiate player, and of course super excited to start on the LPGA. Doing it at the U.S. Women's Open, that's as good as it gets. I'm super excited about that as well.

Q. If I can just ask one more to Maria and Jennifer. The women's game for some time now has been trending younger and younger. You two being four-year college golf stars is kind of a rarity. What would you say has been the biggest area of growth for you in college, and I guess what advice would you give to a younger player who is on the fence about going to school or turning pro?

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I would say one of the biggest -- I mean, my whole personality has changed since I've been in school. I was very introverted and quiet and didn't want to talk to people. Now I'll go up to anyone, or if anyone comes up to me I'll carry on a conversation no problem.

So I think that's just a big thing, as well as public speaking. Being a communications major, that really helped me, especially in what I'm trying to do for a living. I think that's going to help a lot. I've definitely seen improvements, so I would say that's one of the biggest things that's changed.

I guess for a young girl I would say take your chance where you can play other sports, have fun with friends and college that don't necessarily play golf, just because I think when we get out on tour we're really going to see how lonely this is and how much we're going to miss our college friends and being on a college campus where all your friends are.

I think that's going to be probably the biggest struggle we'll face.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think that there is no rush to go into professional golf. I think LPGA is not going to go anywhere, so if they can stay the four years I would 100% suggest that.

I mean, college, we're never coming back to this time in our lives. We're making friends that are probably going to be friends for life. You get to experience so many great things in college that I don't know if you could experience anywhere else.

So I feel like that's really why I love college. You get to learn about so many different cultures and everyone has a different background, different story. I feel like that's pretty neat. I mean, I have eight teammates and they all have different backgrounds and stories. Just getting to learn more about them and where they come from and their traditions and all that, I think it's really valuable, especially with how global golf is becoming.

Just having a better understanding of others, and like Jennifer said, just being able to communicate with other people and being okay with just carrying on with a conversation or even starting a conversation with a stranger. I think it's pretty special.

College has definitely helped me get there, and, I mean, I came to school when I was 17. Really, I mean, did not know what to expect about college and even just living outside Mexico and moving to the U.S., to Fayetteville. It was tough, but at the same time, it's been the best three and a half years of my life.

I've learned so many things. I've grown as a person, an athlete, a golfer. I'm so much more mature now after spending this time away from home and having to learn how to deal with day-to-day things that I wouldn't even think about when I'm at home.

I don't know. I think it's just been a great experience. Going back to I don't know what I would say to younger girls. I think just encourage them to stay involved with sport. If it's golf, great. If it's something else, then it's something else. But do something. Stay active. Keep your head occupied in something healthy and staying active and moving. I mean, if golf is what they choose,

then so be it.

But I feel like there are so many great opportunities out there and so many college scholarships for younger girls out there that all we have to do is work hard and have fun while we do it. I think a lot of people can just have the same experience that I've had here at Arkansas, not only with golf, but any sport.

Yeah, I wouldn't change college for anything.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Maria and Jennifer... go ahead.

Q. You two are sort of in the same boat as far as being the front woman on a team that has experienced quite a bit of growth while you've been on the roster. I'm curious what you would say your role has been in that or your legacy with the program, whether it's Maria getting a few other players from Mexico to go that route or mentorship of some sort...

JENNIFER KUPCHO: I think the first three years we definitely struggled as a team. There was a lot of drama, and I think even during those three years I was kind of the middle man in it all. I just tried to get everyone under control so we could at least have a good time on the road.

I think this year our team chemistry has really just come naturally and we get along so well. I think this year with our success I would say just being a leader and helping our freshman to get transitioned into the college life and the things you can and can't do and stuff like that, simple stuff that being so young they don't know when they first go away from home and go into college.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, I think that I've been really lucky that we've had great teams. When I first got here, Gaby Lopez was playing here, a girl from Mexico. So definitely my first year, just having her as my senior was really helpful and kind of showed me how I wanted to be when I was a senior, when I was an upperclassman.

I think that just having her as a role model was really special. She cared a lot about me as a person, and of course with Shauna and Mike, they just try to make our experience the best it can be. My relationship with Shauna, I mean, it's as good as it gets. I can go to her about anything without any doubt. Like I know I can go to her about absolutely anything. If I'm struggling with something, my personal life, I know I can go to her.

I think having that has helped me help the team to understand that we have those resources available, that I am there for the team, but our coaches and our

staff are also there for them. So I think that this three and a half years has been kind of just that. Being able to show the girls that it's okay to ask for help. We sometimes get so bogged down in results or test grades or whatever.

I always try to just like loosen up the environment and make a dumb joke. I'm always trying to get the girl to smile and to build like a family. I feel like just having each other's back has helped me a lot and has helped them a lot.

So I think that has been my biggest role, just encouraging them to build those relationships amongst each other. With the teams and the people that have come and gone, I feel like I've had good relationships with and built amazing friendships. I call them my sisters now. I don't have a blood sister, but I definitely have 12 or 13 girls I can definitely call my sisters.

I feel that's what's been the most amazing thing that has happened to me in my collegiate career.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Jennifer and Maria, you all both talked about role models. I'm going to transition this really quickly. I know one of you all's big role models is Annika Sorenstam. The Annika Award gets presented every year to the top female Division I collegiate golfer. Last year Maria won the Annika Award and the exemption, and one of the results is an exemption to the Evian Championship. Maria wasn't able to play that last year so the Annika Foundation, they're going to send out a release the next 20, 30 minutes or so. They're going to tweak this -- and Jennifer, this is going to be news to you, too -- that the winner of the Annika Award this year will get an exemption to the 2020 Evian Championship as a result of the Evian Championship moving up from September to July. Kind of gives the Annika Award winner more opportunity to schedule the travel.

So as a result, Maria, I'll get you share the story. Maria receives as the 2018 winner an exemption to the 2019 Evian Championship, her second major she'll be competing in this fall on the LPGA Tour.

So Maria, just share the story about how you found out about this last Friday.

MARIA FASSI: Yeah, so I was studying in between -- I had two finals on Friday and I had just finished my first final and was getting ready for the second one.

I got a text from Mike, Annika's husband, saying, Hey, Annika wants to talk to you for a minute. Do you have some time for her to talk to you? I said, I start a final in like 15 minutes. I was like, You can call me now or I'll just text when I'm done with my final.

No, we'll just call you now. So they called, and of course I was never even thinking about Evian or the exemption or anything else. Just kind of thrown off by her call. Well, she called, congratulated me about Augusta and making internationals. Hey, I have some good news for you. I was like, Okay. What's that?

She told me about how they are going to change, kind of what you said, about the 2018 winner getting into the 2019 Evian. So I was telling her like, of course I wasn't expecting this call, but I was just joking with her. I don't care if I fail this final if I do something like that. You've made my day already. It was just some great news, especially as a rookie on the LPGA. It's going to be great and crucial for me to be able to earn money and keep my card.

Having that opportunity, I mean, I'm just beyond blessed that they thought of me, they changed the rules, and that I'm going to be playing at Evian. So I'm extremely excited about that. Really relieved that I can share that with people because I had to keep it a secret for a little while.

It didn't come easy, so I'm glad that I can just say it out loud now.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: That was your last final exam that you were walking into, right?

MARIA FASSI: Yes. That was my last exam. I mean, going into an exam after that call I think I was really excited. I mean, it was hard to focus on my exam, but I think I did well. I graduated on Saturday, so we're in the clear.

JEREMY FRIEDMAN: Any last questions for the group? By that silence, sounds like we're good. All right, everybody, thank you for joining the call. We will send out a transcript when it's available, probably in the next hour or so.