

Caroline Canales – Round 2 Stroke Play - 2023 U.S. Women's Amateur

Can you feel energy a little bit from some of the folks out here?

I think so. I think LA kind of has this aura about it that people are, I don't know, excited to come. I think a lot of the USGA events are on the east coast that I've played. I think they do have a lot over there. So having it in LA is kind of a special treat for us. I think everyone's kind of really enjoying coming out here.

Are some other players hitting you up for recommendations on where to eat, what to do?

Yes, I have gotten some questions on restaurants and fun things to do, going to the Santa Monica Pier and stuff like that so it's been fun.

What else do you recommend, I'm curious?

I mean, there's such good food here if you like sushi. There's a lot of fun stuff. Beaches, shopping.

What's the best beach around here?

I'm kind of biased. I'm up by Malibu, but down here probably Pacific Palisades area is a good beach.

Are you from Malibu?

No, I live in Calabasas so when we go to the beach, we go to Malibu, when I'm home.

What's your experience with match play in the past and then what are you expecting going forward tomorrow?

I love match play. It's probably my favorite form to play. We play matches here a lot actually in qualifying and I think this course sets up great for match play. I think they're going to mix some tee boxes up, give us something different, maybe make No. 12 kind of reachable. I think they might move back No. 17, just kind of spice it up a little bit in match play. I think the USGA usually mixes it up a little bit. I think it would be competitive and you just need to take it one match at a time and go from there.

Is this when things get serious? It feels like some of the players here are just happy to have the whole experience and all that, but now going forward is it a little more cutthroat?

I think it will definitely get a little bit more pressure filled. I think once you see the field decrease to 64 and then 32 it seems almost empty if you go far in match play. I think it really amps up the pressure a little bit. I think that's when it's the most fun and it's the U.S. Am, it's always going to be pressure. I think it will be really fun for everyone.

How long did you have this one circled on the calendar?

Quite a while. I think once I got to school and we knew that the Woman's Am was going to be here, we came out a lot and played different tee boxes. I mean, we've just played a lot. The club has been nice enough to let me come out this summer and get a couple rounds in, even when I was at home. It's been circled on the calendar for quite a while.

There's a lot of people that think, Alan alluded to the allure of LA can maybe throw some people off, putting so much pressure on yourself. Some people could have come out here and faltered. Why do you think you've been able to play so well through stroke play?

I mean, that's a good point. I think in my qualifier I definitely felt pressure to qualify just because I knew that if I made it, I would know the course well and it would be a good opportunity to kind of capitalize. I think just focusing on your process, it sounds cliché, but I think it's one of the only things that helps kind of break down your round and what situation you're in. So yeah, it's tough to kind of avoid that pressure but we have to do it somehow and breathe through it.

What do you know about Briana Chacon?

Yeah, she's awesome. We're good friends. We grew up playing because she's from SoCal as well. She's a very competitive, very tough, in match play as well. We played the East Lake Cup with Oregon back in the fall and she was very good in match play. I think she'll be tough to beat going into the week. Yeah, she's nails.

What do you like about her game?

Very strong, very powerful. It's a big, big draw, big, high draw and you can just tell how competitive she is even by looking at her. I think she's definitely going to be a force to be reckoned with later in the week.