

# U.S. Women's Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Thursday August 4, 2016

## Virginia Elena Carta

**Q. You actually got down early; you were down one through three holes but fought back, including one stretch where you won four in a row?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Mm-hmm.

**Q. Quite a back-and-forth match. Start off telling us how you feel reaching the quarterfinals.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: It feels really good to be able to play tomorrow for sure. I'm really excited to have that opportunity.

The match this afternoon, I felt as good as this morning. My long game was not as good, but at the same time, I could handle the greens well, the pace well, some putts. I missed like a really short putt, like three-footer on 9 for birdie to win the hole, and that was kind of -- kind of upset me because we couldn't figure out the slope and where to aim. So that was pretty bad.

But after that, I just kept being focused again and hit a good shot on 10, and that gave me the motivation to keep going and keep hitting good shots.

I thought on the par-3, hitting like half 3-wood would have been the correct decision on 13, 14 -- 14. But it was not. I had to hit like a full 3-wood with this wind. But I mean, even if I had a bogey there, I could handle the next hole. I played with another strategy on 15 because this morning with the wind kind of in front playing 3-wood on the left was not the best idea because I had a really short club, and I had like a full shot, so it bounced close to the pin but then like spun back, and I found it like 45 yards back. So having a 9-iron into the green was the correct decision for sure. Then unfortunately I missed the putt for birdie, but then we went on to 16, and it was a good choice, iron choice on 16.

**Q. How aware are you that only one person has ever won the NCAA and this and only one Italian woman has won this, only one man won it about 20 minutes from here. Are you aware of the kind of historical significance of what you might be able to do?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes. I know, but I don't want to focus on the big picture, and this is what I



learned at nationals this year, that I didn't have to think about winning or scoring low. I just had to think about every single shot and like what iron to pick and where to hit, and that was the key that made me win nationals, so I think that's the key, also, to playing my best game this week. And then of course we'll see how that goes. That would be, of course, amazing, but at the same time I don't want to think about that. I want to think about tomorrow morning coming here, having a good practice, and trying to have a good night's sleep tonight and get ready for the match and then think about every single shot.

**Q. Do you remember anything about Molinari, or were you too little?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: I do remember.

**Q. Do you know him?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes, I do know him. I know both brothers. I mean, having both Molinari and Manassero on the guys' side, and then players like Giulia Sergas, Diana Luna, Giulia Molinaro, and then a player that I always used to play with is Stefania Croce. Like I learned a lot from her. She shared so many experiences, and that was great. I had the opportunity to play also with Silvia Cavalleri who won in 1997 here. I was actually -- I'm in touch with her in these couple of days because her name on the cup was spelled wrong, so we were in touch about that. But it was just --

**Q. Did you point that out to her?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes.

**Q. We'll get it fixed.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: But just like being in touch with her, it's super cool because she's a past winner, and then seeing all those great players as past winners like Morgan Pressel or like Juli Inkster, Lydia Ko, and then like my friends like Kristen Gillman or Emma Talley, Anna Sullivan, it's pretty impressive.

**Q. What do you remember about Molinari because you were only seven?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yeah, I know that he won and that was pretty cool how he won, but I don't remember details.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about this year? You've obviously jumped into the pot of college golf and**

**played with a pretty good school and you won the NCAAs. Talk about this whole year. We're in August now. Where are you?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yeah, this year was -- passed by really fast. I haven't realized I'm going to be a sophomore, and I hate people already calling me sophomore. I would like to be like freshman in transition or something like that.

But it has been great. I've been studying a lot. I've been studying seven, eight hours a day, so that kept me busy. But at the same time, I think just like studying, having to study and then to practice, I was way more organized other than just like practicing. So if you already decide that you want to study, it's a great challenge, but at the same time you balance kind of your life and everything is planned and scheduled better.

And then finish -- like ending the year, as I was saying, winning nationals, that was great.

**Q. Was that a surprise?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes, it was unexpected. I was playing good. Like my long game has always been good this year since like from October, since like ever, but at the same time, I've been struggling a lot with my putter. But as soon as I got to the course of nationals and I was playing the practice round, I was putting the ball close to the pin and then making some putts, so that gave me some confidence going into the first round.

What I actually did was play the last round of practice rounds as if it was the first round because I figured out that the first round of tournament I was struggling a little bit during the season, so my practice round was actually the first round, so going into the first round, I was already relaxed because I had already played a round. I tried to do the same here but was kind of tougher, and I think that's why the first day I shot 3-over, and then I realized that -- I expected actually the scores to be way higher in qualifying here, but then as soon as I realized that they were kind of low, I figured out that I had to shoot a low score the second day.

But this year has been great. Having the opportunity just to go to the Marathon Classic after winning nationals and playing with the pros and getting to know them, that was super exciting. Sharing experiences and advice with like pros like Brittany Lang that had just won the U.S. Open, and then Lydia Ko or Stacy Lewis and all the others.

**Q. Did you seek out that exemption or did somebody call you?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: No, I was -- winning nationals I think it's the second year that you get

exempted for that tournament.

**Q. How much confidence did you gain from the NCAAs, especially on the greens, because of how difficult the greens were there?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: These greens are super hard. I changed putters from nationals to here. I actually changed it two days before playing in Ohio or something like that.

**Q. From what to what?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: It's a Titleist putter. It's a GOLO 5 and before it was a Ping putter.

But I'm excited because it's lighter, and that's -- I needed a change. I've always had really heavy putters, so probably changing to a super light putter was better. But at the same time I think the confidence from nationals is still on my mind because I know that I can actually make some putts, and that's what happened today on the 12th hole on the first match. I had a really, really long putt for birdie, and I made it, and that reminded me of nationals right after because I was like, oh, wait, like at nationals I was making like super long putts, too. So that kept my mind actually like positive because it reminded me of nationals.

It's always on the back of my mind, but at the same time, because every putt is kind of different, especially here on this course, I'm just like trying to be as focused as I can every single putt.

**Q. Will you be wearing the colors of the national soccer team all week? Is that the first time you broke these out all week?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: No, it's the -- I mean, of course it's the golf team, but no, we usually do it when we play international tournaments, and since my caddie is the coach of the national team, I felt like playing with the Duke golf bag and Duke golf balls and playing with Italian -- and Duke shoes, too, and marker, too. But Italian outfit.

**Q. How do we do Italian food here? How do we measure up? You said you found a place.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: So I found this place that I recommend, and I'm not actually kidding. It's so good.

**Q. What is it?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: It's Il Granio.

**Q. Where is it?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: It's 20 minutes from here. It's super good.

**Q. Were you surprised you found a good Italian restaurant?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes, definitely.

**Q. We do have a Little Italy in Philadelphia that's very good. What do we usually do wrong?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: The pasta. So cooking the pasta is super overcooked, but other than that, the problems are like all the dressings and the sauces are like way too heavy, not talking about pizza because pizza is completely different. But it's okay. It's okay. I just gained 25 pounds.

**Q. What do you do for Italian?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yeah, gaining 25 pounds in one semester.

**Q. Is it barbecue that you've gained 25 pounds?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: No, cookies, I think. I'm not a big fan of deserts, but it just happened that I got addicted. But now I lost some, so it's fine. It's so good.

**Q. What's your caddie's name, the Italian coach?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Roberto.

**Q. Is it like Robert with an O?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes, exactly, and Z-a-p-p-a is the surname, like Frank Zappa.

**Q. How comfortable does that make you having him here?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: I mean, he was the one putting me into the national team when I was 12, and so he has been following me until now, so he's probably bored.

**Q. I doubt it.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: So it's great to have him because I have a lot of confidence with him on my bag, and I know him really well. We have been playing a lot of tournaments together. We won some international tournaments together, too, when he was giving me the strategy before going out on the course.

**Q. And you can speak Italian and nobody knows what you're saying?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes. I mean, here everyone is Italian, so probably everyone understands. But yes, we can -- I mean, it's easier to speak Italian maybe. I'm not sure. I get confused.

**Q. Will you go home before school starts?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: I'm going to go home for two weeks and then school starts again. I'm pretty excited.

**Q. Fast.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yeah, really fast, but I'm going to be missing a lot of school, unfortunately, for

tournaments this fall. Like unfortunately and fortunately. But at the same time because I'm going to have hard classes, it's going to be hard to keep up.

**Q. What are you majoring in?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Environmental sciences and policy.

**Q. You sound like you're doing a lot of work this summer. Is that just part of making up for maybe what you might miss in the fall a little bit?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: No. It was like a plan that I already made and a decision that I made last year. I knew I wanted to study in the summer to make my life easier then, like whenever I needed it. But then I have this econ class in the fall that kind of scares me, but it's okay. I can do this.

**Q. Are you taking summer school now?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: No, I had to the first of July. It started the 18th of May, so during nationals and then it ended the first of July.

**Q. Which class was that?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: So I was supposed to take math, but then the professor kind of got -- I like had a discussion with the professor because of missing nationals, so I had to attend math without taking it and then taking a sociology class because it was the only class available. So I've been auditing math. But at least I'm ready for math. As soon as I get it, I'm going to be ready. I mean, I've been studying as if I was actually taking the class, so that's helpful.

**Q. How bummed were you to miss the European Am because of a flight delay?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: That was really sad.

**Q. You go back to Italy?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes. I went back to Italy right after. That was the only flight available. We tried all the combinations, but the only combination was making me arriving in Sweden at like 1:00 in the morning of the day of the tournament without a practice round. I was like, no, not going to do this. So I just went back home.

**Q. So maybe you're a little more rested for this event than you would have been?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Yes, but at the same time more jet lagged because going back home, I had a super -- I was super jet lagged with American time, so I wasn't able to go to sleep until like 4:00 in the morning back home, and then as soon as I kind of got used to going to bed earlier, I had to leave to come back here. So coming back here, it was like, I am jet lagged. But it's good. Coming back here, it's nice. You get up early

and you go to sleep early. It's good.

**Q. What would it mean to you to win this tournament? I know that you're taking it one shot at a time and one round at a time, but what would it mean to win the US Women's Amateur?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: I'm not sure, because it would be a huge dream for me to win this tournament, and just knowing that past Duke players, as Virada and Amanda Blumenherst won this tournament, that makes me really happy, and I'm going to try to do my best to win. I actually -- I met Amanda and I've spent time with her and she's awesome, and I was joking with my assistant coach and my coach about the big pictures that they have in our building at the golf course with Virada's and Amanda's trophies and pictures and stuff, and they were like, oh, yeah, like you can do this. It's just like this summer. So that would be a dream.

But yeah, as I said, we'll see how that goes.

**Q. Going to the same Italian place tonight?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Oh, yes. Definitely not changing.

**Q. When Molinari won, he had the same roast beef, I think, whatever they were serving in the clubhouse. He had the same meal.**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Oh, here the food is so good, by the way.

**Q. Do you get the same thing every night?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: So I wanted to, but then I was at dinner with my coach, like the national team coach, and my coach at Duke, and they were getting this kind of like pasta thing, so they were making it like the best thing ever. Like oh, my God, this is going to be so good, this is going to be great, so I had to switch at the last minute, like okay, I'm getting that too. But I think I'm going to go back to my fish of the first day. That was good.

**Q. What's it called again, the restaurant?**

VIRGINIA ELENA CARTA: Il Granio. The only thing about that is just like if you come and you want to -- I know because of my coach, because he was disappointed because he wanted a beer, but they don't serve alcohol, so you have to bring your own. So I just wanted to let you know.