

**117 VISA ARGENTINA OPEN**  
Presented by Macro

**ROUND 1 QUOTES**  
February 29, 2024



**ALVARO ORTIZ (-6)**

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**Q. Could you just sort of walk me through the highlights of the day, bogey-free round?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** Yeah, it was, yeah, a great round. Bogey free is always good. I think the clutch moment of the round was hole No. 1, 2 and 3 where I missed the greens and I got those three up-and-downs. They were quite complicated, but like I said, I think that let me keep the momentum that I had coming from the great start and I was able to make those birdies on 5 and 8, finished at 6 under.

So very happy with the way I played. I've been playing really good golf for, I don't know, the last year and a half. Yeah, very happy with my start. And still there's 54 holes left, so got to focus and get ready for tomorrow.

**Q. What would you say like your personal assessment of the front nine compared to the back nine is and just how different each of them are?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** Honestly, I haven't given it that much thought. Honestly, I think the number -- the front nine's a little tighter than the back nine. However, in the front nine we don't require to hit that many drivers, which makes it I guess very similar.

Definitely the tougher holes are on the back nine. Just I think 17, 15, there's a couple holes where you have to be quite careful with them. Honestly, I think they're very similar. You can get -- if you're hot enough, you can get very low on both of them. Greens are rolling very good.

Honestly, it's a golf course that if you just keep it in the fairway, you're going to be able to shoot low scores. I've been driving it well, so happy with the way I played, happy with the position I'm in and yeah, looking forward to tomorrow.

**Q. Played Mexico Open last week, Argentina Open this week. I mean, what's it like playing in a national open compared to say a traditional PGA TOUR or Korn Ferry Tour event?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** It definitely is different. It's like, I don't know, maybe in South America or Latin America we don't have that many golf tournaments, so I guess the Opens of each country, they just become somewhat special, especially to the people that are there from



that country.

I know here in Argentina, golf is sort of a -- they live it very well, they really feel the sport, the tradition and everything around it. I know the Argentina Open is one of the most I guess respected opens in the world. The Mexico Open's a little bit of the same. For us it's always been a special tournament. They have the little extra, I guess. It can be the same as the U.S. Open because the U.S. Open's a major, but it's sort of that feeling that you're playing the open of your country, of a country. I guess you want to engrave your name in one of those trophies.

**Q. Last week also made a top-15 finish. What would you say is your biggest takeaway from that finish for you?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** Honestly, just sort of like a consolidation of the great golf that I've been playing the last year or so and how good I've been doing, my process and all the changes that I've been going through technically and mentally.

I started working with a new coach about a year and a half ago, same with a neurologist, so I'm just happy that the process is paying off and that I'm doing the right thing. It's I guess a confidence booster of my process and that I'm doing the right thing and got to keep at it.

**Q. What ultimately led you to make those significant changes?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** I actually -- I haven't spoke about this, but I was -- I was in a really bad position when I finished. Mentally, I was really bad spot when I finished my 2022 season of the Korn Ferry. When I lost my card, I was in a hole and I sort of I guess I wanted to destroy everything that I created at that point. That's sort of like the position that led me to switch my coaches and my neurologist and everything.

Honestly, looking back, I know that my old coach, he wasn't the problem. He's a great golf coach and I will be forever grateful for the work that we put in for I think it was 12 years that we worked together. His name is Justin Pointer, I love him. I think with him I could be able to play this kind of golf or even better, but it's just I guess I needed that change mentally.

And it worked out. It honestly took me a couple months to get out of -- I guess out of that vicious cycle that I was in mentally. Took me a couple months to fully take responsibility of the actions and everything that I put myself to be in that position. I guess it made me a better person, made me a better player, and yeah, happy I'm much better now and happy to be here.

**Q. You mentioned majors as well. What does it mean to you to have to compete for a major exemption this week?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** It's awesome. I guess that's kind of what makes it special about the Argentina Open. It's been, I don't know how many years since they've given an Open



exemption. Yeah, it's special, it's special. We don't get often to play qualifier for a major, so it makes it that little extra special.

Just super grateful that the Argentina Open, they switched to a Korn Ferry event this year. Yeah, I'm just happy to be here and very grateful for everybody that makes this possible. I know there's a bunch of sponsors, a very private clubs and the members are giving up their golf course for a week, so I'm just very grateful for all those people that make it possible.

**Q. And last question from me, not only did you play amazing last week, but that was your home country. What does it mean to play golf at home and then come out this week and have a great start to your first round?**

**ALVARO ORTIZ:** Definitely, it's awesome, it's awesome. Like I said, we don't get to play that much often in Mexico, especially the big tournaments.

Man, the support of the people that I got on the weekend was crazy, crazy. I guess I've never experienced something like that. Every single hole starting on Saturday was probably more than 100, 150 people on each hole. To me -- I know for some other players it's not big, but you know, I was getting, I don't know, 30, 50 feet and the people why just roaring and it was awesome.

It was a little bit bittersweet that I didn't have the weekend that, you know, I guess everybody would have wanted, and myself, too. Just very happy with the way that people responded and came out to support me. To have that experience, play like that, I know I was one shot away from top-10 and being in West Palm this week, but just very happy that I had the opportunity to be there and just grateful for all the support that I got.

