



NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

It's not easy to achieve success as a professional golfer, much less as one from a Northeastern state like New Jersey.

Marina Alex has defied those odds, and she's done so in impressive fashion. The 31-year old from Wayne began her 10th season on the LPGA Tour in January by making the cut and finishing 34th at the Gainbridge LPGA At Boca Rio and then followed with a fourth-place finish at the LPGA Drive On Championship at Crown Colony, which earned her \$54,379 while pushing her career total to \$3,488,799.

Marina, who began playing at a driving range in Wayne when she was 4, was the No. 1 player on the Wayne Hills boys team in high school.

During that time period, girl's teams were just beginning to emerge, but as a precursor, the state tournament for girls was underway. She was the NJSIAA Girls Tournament of Champions winner in both 2007 and 2008, winning by six strokes as a junior and a record-setting eight shots as a senior. She also won the Passaic County co-ed championship both years. Among her notable outside tournament achievements, she was runner-up in the 2005 New Jersey State Amateur and qualified for three USGA Junior Girls Championships.

Competing against the boys was never a problem for Alex.

"I do have some great memories playing on the high school golf team, and at that point, we only had a boys team," she said in an interview. "And now Wayne Hills has a girl's team, which is great to see."

She played collegiately at Vanderbilt, where she became just the second women's golfer in Southeastern Conference history to be twice named SEC Player of the Year. She was also twice named a first-team All-America. Alex was a 2015 Inductee into the Vanderbilt Athletic Hall of Fame.

Her breakthrough year as a pro came in 2017, when she made 21 cuts in 25 events, with six Top 10 finishes, as well as an 11th place showing at the U.S. Open. She ended the year with \$699,895 in earnings and went over the \$1 million career mark.

In 2018, she made 20 cuts in 24 events and won her first event, the Cambia Portland Classic. She earned \$901,322 that season, good for 17th on the money list.

She continued her solid play in 2019, making 21 cuts in 24 events, with five Top 10 finishes, earning \$609,290, and making the United States Solheim Cup team.

With Covid-19 cutting the tour schedule in both 2020 and 2021, she continued to perform well. Highlights included a fourth-place finish at the Australian Open in 2020 and a seventh-place showing at the Scottish Open in 2021.

