

women to watch

By Rebecca MacDonald

JAN DOWLING

In our inaugural issue (May/June 2004), we interviewed Futures Tour player Jan Dowling as our first “Woman to Watch.” This year, she won a spot as a contestant on The Golf Channel’s “Big Break III, Ladies Only” reality show. We caught up with Dowling after she was eliminated from the challenge in episode 6.

How did you hear about show?

I watch The Golf Channel a lot and I saw all the commercials for it. I was inspired because it was a chance to get on the LPGA Tour, and that’s ultimately where I want to be.

What was the qualification process?

They did an audition where I hit a ton of shots: driver, 5-iron, a hook and a fade. I had to hit flop shots and pitch shots with different yardages, then we did a 10-minute interview on camera.

Did you do anything different or special to prepare for the show?

No, I really didn’t have much time. I was getting ready for (LPGA) Qualifying School, and went straight from Q-School to the show. I did go shopping!

On the first show, you all seemed to have instant camaraderie. How did that change as the show went on?

Golf is special that way. When you’re on the course, it’s you and you only. Obviously we were all out there to win and it definitely got more intense. But once that was over, we were back to being friends.

There was a lot of bad weather on the show. How did that affect everyone?

I just turned it into a positive. Everyone did, but in their own way. It was the same for everyone and you just sucked it up. It wasn’t ideal, but it was something you couldn’t control, just like when you’re playing in a tournament. I think that’s where experience came in.

What was it like doing the skills challenges in front of television cameras?

It was nerve-racking, for sure! I’ve never experienced such adrenaline and nervousness, consistently, on every shot I hit.



How did you control it?

(Laughs) Well, I guess I didn’t control it that well! But it was great to pull off shots under that pressure, with the adrenaline pumping. It was just a matter of staying calm and going through your routine, knowing and trusting yourself, that was the big thing. It was probably the best thing I got out of that show, being able to hit those shots under that kind of pressure.

When you did the skills challenges, could you hear hosts Vince Cellini and Stephanie Sparks whispering their commentary?

A lot of time it’s edited in afterward. But sometimes I’d be trying to get into my routine and look over, thinking, “Hey, shut up!” You’re thinking, this is a really important shot and they’re still talking! They were awesome though. We called Vince “The Italian Stallion,” and Stephanie had a lot of good insights to share.

Any bloopers that didn’t get shown?

I would love to see a bloopers tape! There was one when the producer wanted us to do this dramatic shot, walking back from the green, all 10 of us. So we decided to all fall down at the same time. It was funny! 🐾