

# Dana Open presented by Marathon

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Sylvania, Ohio, USA

Highland Meadows Golf Club

## Rose Zhang

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, a little bit of rain never hurt anyone. Pleased to be joined by Rose Zhang. Rose, coming off a week at Pebble Beach, third consecutive Top 10 finish.

How are you feeling going into Toledo this week?

ROSE ZHANG: It's been pretty great. So far I've just been enjoying life. And I've learned a lot in the last couple weeks, so going into this event, you know, I'm just as excited.

Feel a little bit under the weather if you can't tell by my voice.

But I am slowly just trying to get the momentum and really how much of a grind tour life is in general.

**Q. We talked to Allisen right before you. Allisen had to suddenly change all her travel plans to come. Obviously plans changed for her. What were they like for you to get out here?**

ROSE ZHANG: Well, it wasn't exactly a well-intended travel plan either. I flew out at 6:00 a.m. from Monterrey, but went into Phoenix, everything was going well, as planned, but I had a nine-hour delay, so got in Tuesday morning at 3:00 a.m. to my hotel.

It's been a little bit rough. So I've just -- you know, when you're lacking that much sleep and playing nine and trying to see a new golf course, it's pretty straightforward in general, this course is really pure.

But, you know, you definitely are not in the mindset to just play every single shot how you see. So I'm just going along with it. I think that this is going to be a test for me. It'll just allow me to grow harder and better as a person.

**Q. You talk about learning, about what life on tour is like. Over the last couple weeks, what are some of**

**those lessons that you learned?**

ROSE ZHANG: Well, there is -- well, first of all, it's just so new. You know, I came as an amateur and now as a professional you have a lot more people kind of gravitating towards you for autographs, maybe just hollering out, go Rose, cheering you on. So that's the new dynamic I never really had before.

And in addition, just understanding how to manage your body and the fitness aspect, nutrition aspect. These are all things that are very niche and a lot of pros are detail oriented about it. Kind of learning about how to take care of myself in the midst of all the chaos.

And there is a lot going on. There is a lot of schedule plans. On a day-to-day basis you have a lot of obligations. So for me, I haven't been having as much time to myself, which is fine. But there is moments where I really need to carve out some silence for me. I think that's kind of the things that I've been really focusing on.

And the golf game itself. You're on the LPGA Tour. There is so many good players, best in the world, and you're going to have to be able to guide yourself in the midst of that as well.

**Q. I remember it was either Mizuho or KPMG you talked about when you're in college, about there is so much time to carve out on the range. So much time to work on the golf game. Having to balance that with the responsibilities, have you felt a little bit more comfortable, or is it kind of just trying to get it under your belt at this point?**

ROSE ZHANG: Right. I think it's kind of the latter, get it under my belt. Since you don't have as much time you really have to focus on details, and sometimes you have to go into events that you don't feel as comfortable playing in.

That's kind of how you are able to navigate your golf game, and you're going to have to quote-unquote grind it out. So I think that's usually the game plan, even if you aren't as comfortable and you don't have a lot of reps. Just being able to commit to every golf shot on the golf course and

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playing out a plan that will allow you to play the best to your ability is much more crucial.

**Q. Obviously this is an interesting tournament for you because you originally received an exemption through your win for being the NCAA individual champion. Then being able to win and earn it an professional LPGA Tour member, what was that like for you continuing this obligation and commitment?**

ROSE ZHANG: It's pretty crazy. I mean, yeah, I was originally going to come into this event as an amateur. Now that I'm playing as a professional and I'll be in the field trying to go after the title, it's something that I haven't really thought about.

Now it's just kind of the reality, and I'm really enjoying it. To be able to play this kind of events, you know, on the LPGA schedule, it's something that you kind of dream about, because on a week-to-week basis you want to be able to play with all the amazing players and make this your real lifestyle.

I'm just enjoying it. Toledo has been great so far. I know that this is a first where players can have dining and there is just so many more open amenities that I think all the players appreciate.

**Q. You turned pro obviously well into the season this year. How big of a goal was the Solheim Cup team, making that for you?**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I haven't thought about it much going in as a new professional, but now I've really realized that playing the Solheim Cup is much more of a possibility. So I mean, being able to make the team would mean the world. To play against the best on the European Team and representing your country is something that all athletes admire and want to go for.

So I've played the Junior Solheim Cup twice. I've understood how that dynamic works, how amazing of an event it is, so being able to make it on the U.S. team would certainly be a pretty forefront goal.

**Q. And have you had conversations with Stacy since you turned two about the Solheim Cup?**

ROSE ZHANG: Here and there. I mean, we don't talk about it explicitly. She was my captain before at Spirit International, so all I've been doing is catching up with her on how life is, how Chesnee is. We just talk about that. She's been great helping me adjust to the tour life.

She's like, Oif you need anything, I'm here and I can give

you advice. We haven't been talking about the Solheim Cup per se. I know she's busy on her plate.

**Q. You kind of taken the LPGA by storm in the two months, less than that really, that you've been here. Are you aware it shouldn't be this easy?**

ROSE ZHANG: (Smiling.) By no means do I think it's easy. In the last couple events I've been playing in I've really realized how difficult being on tour is, and even though I placed well, finished well, it's safe to say that I have not thought this was an easy ride at all.

And I've had -- even in the last three events I've played in there is a bit of ups and downs, like just with understanding how everything works and I've been keeping myself busy.

But I feel like the people around me have really kept me grounded and allowed me to balance out my life still a little bit more.

But, no, it's not easy. I totally think that with the veterans out here, like they're just so resilient. You really have to be resilient and grounded when it comes to playing on a daily basis.

**Q. Getting back to being an amateur here, now a pro here, did your success make the decision for you to turn pro? Could you take us in that decision making process?**

ROSE ZHANG: Of course. A little bit. I came into -- I came into college freshman fall kind of thinking what should I do with my entire, you know, game plan for professional golf.

Because, you know, by that time there is a lot of conversations on whether or not I should turn professional or whether or not I should stay in college and play collegiate golf.

But I had a sit-down with coach and we talked about my ambitions. Ultimately I did want to go play professional golf, but you really have to understand that playing well means that it's best for you to have stages where you can see yourself improving and see yourself moving on to the next level.

Collegiate golf is my determiner on whether or not I felt like I was ready for what pro life was and what pro life is going to be. Playing well in college definitely allowed me to realize, hey, maybe I can move on. I can test my limits, see what I can do out on tour.

So that's what ultimately allowed me to shift to have



moving on.

**Q. And the last one from me: What's the best advice you got from a fellow LPGA Tour player thus far?**

ROSE ZHANG: Oh, best advice. I have received a lot of support and advice from so many players, but I think the consensus, like all the players, they did reiterate this one thing of take care of yourself, because when you're out on tour it's not so much trying to play super well every single week, or every single week and trying to go for that trophy.

It's more so the consistency of yourself and the longevity of your game. So taking care of your body. Making sure you're well rested. At the same time, having responsibilities and allowing yourself to do what you need to do on the golf course.

These are all things that require balance, and that's what they've been emphasizing. It's just balance out your life. Golf is not your entire world even though it is your profession.

Just enjoy it.

**Q. You talked about the attention you received and adapting to this. I imagine the U.S. Women's Open was another degree of fan attention. What was that like? Any interactions with fans that stood out to you last week?**

ROSE ZHANG: Fans? Well, it's been really cool just to see how much home support I've been getting just because I'm only an hour away from Pebble, and everyone coming was just, one, they were Stanford Cardinal fans, and that was exciting to hear them say, go Card. That was something I missed from college.

Just having them show that school spirit, it has been really cool. Couple Stanford grads that came out and said hi. I had a couple friends currently in college as well and I'll be seeing them in the winter. They came out to support.

Also I played with my teammates so that entire environment has been really comfortable for me. Yeah, fans as well, so many family, friends also came up from Southern California. You don't want to miss a chance to watch Pebble and see all the women players play at such a prestigious course.

So I think at the moment the crowds have been really high energy and it's been really fun to be out there.

**Q. Having such sized crowds have you seen any impact from that on your play?**

ROSE ZHANG: I don't really know. I can't really answer that just because I don't really know what my game would be like if there were no crowds.

But at the same time, I think that I treat these crowds as a motivator, as people who really want to just see me play well and perform well and come out and cheer for me.

So I don't think there is a negative impact in any sense seeing these crowds out here.

A lot of them actually don't play golf, so whenever you're out there, even if you hit the golf ball probably only 30 yards, they'll probably still be cheering for you. (Laughter.)

**Q. Curious, seems like every day there is another headline that refers to you as like maybe the next Tiger Woods. How do you feel about that when you see that kind of thing?**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, that's interesting, because I feel like I haven't really gone on the internet and searched my own name and seen my name next to Tiger Woods.

I will say that it is an honor, you know, just to have his name and my name be in the same conversation. It's not something that get to see every day, so if that's the case, that's amazing.

I will say that I'm just so different from him in terms of personality and kind of -- like it's also a different generation, so I don't really think about me having to, I guess, achieve what he achieved. Like it's insane. There is only one Tiger Woods in this world and in this time frame.

I admire him so much in his career, but, yeah, I think it's incredible that we are in the same conversation.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much, Rose.

ROSE ZHANG: Thank you.

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