

AIG Women's Open

Tuesday, 18 August, 2020

Hinako Shibuno

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Obviously last year, winning the tournament was a life-changer for me and I became like a celebrity in Japan.

Q. Since you have become the champion I've seen that you have had lots of very interesting experiences like meeting Tiger Woods and you were even the honorary police chief for a day. What has been the best thing that you have done since being the champion?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: I've had a lot of experiences but nothing that tops my experience of winning the Women's Open.

Q. You said you have become like a celebrity in Japan. Can you explain to us and describe what your home coming welcome was like when you arrived back in Japan last year?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: Appearing in front of so many people at the airport when I returned, it was something that I only saw on TV. So it really gave me goosebumps. It was a great experience.

Q. You played Royal Troon for the first time yesterday. What did you think of the golf course?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: It wasn't as windy as I expected, but maybe because of the rain, the fairway wasn't as firm as I had anticipated. So if I can keep my shots straight, if I don't bend it into the rough, I don't really think that I'll be in much trouble, but I especially think that I need to be careful of putting it into the fairway bunkers. That would put me in some trouble.

Q. Speaking of bunkers, what did you think of the par-3 8th hole, The Postage Stamp?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: So I practised the bunker on the right yesterday. It's a short hole but it looks so much narrower than I had seen on TV and I think that it's going to be difficult.

Q. You mentioned it was a lot more narrow than you

had seen on TV. Have you watched The Open played at Royal Troon on TV in the past, and does the course live up to your expectations?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: I watched The Open in 2016, the final day. I only watched the final day, but from what I saw on TV, it looked very windy, and it did also seem very narrow on TV, as well. But the green today, it wasn't as firm as I had expected when I was watching The Open.

Q. You're going to go out and play another practise round this afternoon. What in particular will you be looking at on the golf course and what areas of your game will you be particularly focusing on?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: I want to focus on my tee shots to not put it in the fairway bunker like I said before. And also, my strategies around the green, how I am going to approach around the greens.

Q. I was in Japan shortly before you won the women's British Open and every magazine had your face on it. Was that a shock to you after you won at Woburn and has it been difficult to cope with all the attention?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: Looking at myself on the magazines and the newspapers, it really felt unreal. It didn't feel like it was myself. But what was difficult about getting that attention was by winning the majors, I had set a higher expectation on myself and it was kind of difficult to cope with reality with the high expectations that I had set on myself.

Q. Did the fact that you won last year, and were dubbed the "Smiling Cinderella," what did that mean at the time, and is that a natural thing you've always played with the smile on your face, and will you have a smile on your face this week if the Scottish weather turns miserable, as may be the case?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: I've always been conscious of keeping a smile on my face while I'm playing, but after winning the Women's Open last year, it made me realise, once again, the importance of playing with a smile on my face.

And this week, it's going to be windy and there's some rain to be expected and the course is going to play out very



differently depending on the wind. I'm going to have to play smart. But at the same time as defending champion, I'm going to enjoy, and also I want to show a new part of the game, some new part of my game this year.

Q. Are these two weeks your first two weeks in Scotland and how are you enjoying the challenge of links golf and the weather?

HINAKO SHIBUNO: It's my first time in Scotland. I do have that impression of the links course being very windy, experience various weathers in a day, but I've been fully preparing myself to play well over here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports