

AIG Women's Open

Sunday, 23 August, 2020

Sophia Popov

Quick Quotes

Q. The 2020 AIG Women's Open Champion. How good does that sound?

SOPHIA POPOV: Honestly, I don't even know. I can't get anything out of my mouth (tearing up).

It feels amazing. There's a lot of hard work behind it, and a lot of struggles that I went through the last six years, especially health-wise, and I'm just glad I was able to overcome everything and just keep my head in it. I knew I was capable. I just had a lot of obstacles thrown in my way, and I just -- I'm glad I stuck with it. I almost quit playing last year, so thank God I didn't.

Q. Everybody kind of knows this, but three victories on the Cactus Tour, a mini tour in the United States. Then you caddied for your friend, Anne van Dam. Then you played the Marathon Classic on the LPGA Tour to earn your spot here. Then you played on the Symetra Tour, tied second there and came over here late, one practise round, and now you are the Women's Open Champion. Can you believe the journey that 2020 has taken you on?

SOPHIA POPOV: No, it's been really incredible. Everyone said, you know, how are you playing in Phoenix the week before The Open? I said, you know, my focus this year was still the Symetra Tour and that was more important to me as far as the Money List goes, and I said, I'm going to stick with the schedule that I had. The British Open to me was a bonus and I got here on Tuesday, and I said, you know, I know my game is in really good shape. I know anything's possible and I think I took that belief with me to every round but I never expected this. Obviously like I mean, I was über-nervous this whole round, and I'm just so glad I could get it done, and it was definitely different than winning a Cactus Tour event.

Q. How was it sleeping on the lead? You said last night you were going to be nervous, but you would stick to your routine. How difficult was it coming out today with everything at stake?

SOPHIA POPOV: I used to always be the kind of player that liked to not lead, to maybe come from a couple shots



behind, and so it was a new position for me to be in especially at an event like this. I think the last time I can think of being in contention was two years ago in Grand Rapids at the LPGA event in Meijer. The nerves were similar to that, but obviously on a whole other scale.

But it was weird because inside I felt like I was making so many good shots the last three days, and you kind of had to, considering the conditions, and so I had this belief this morning going into the round. I said, you know, no matter what happens today, you're always capable of making birdies on any hole, so just keep your head in it and try to calm down, and kudos to my boyfriend for keeping me calm, thanks.

Q. When an honour has it been to compete on Royal Troon, this fabulous links layout?

SOPHIA POPOV: We've been extremely privileged. The last two holes, thank God, I could take it in a little bit and I looked around and it's just so beautiful and it's such an amazing course. Honestly, thank you to AIG, to R&A, to everyone that has played a role this week in making this championship the championship it is. I mean, we were taken care of so well all week. It's incredible. I haven't had this in a long time. I was just happy everything went really smoothly.

Considering everything we have to deal with right now with COVID, the way we were taken care of was just incredible, and I want to say thank you for that.

Q. You are based in Arizona, used to the warm weather. A final word on the glorious Scottish weather we have seen this week?

SOPHIA POPOV: I really don't mind it that much. Like I told you a million times, I grew up playing the British Am, the British Girls' and I honestly like it except for I get really cold, that's true. That's why I was wearing my mittens for 18 holes, which is probably a little, you know, overdoing it, but I was cold but it was so beautiful today, and thanks for a little calmer weather.

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