

ANA Inspiration

Friday, April 2, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Shanshan Feng

Quick Quotes

Q. Continuing her impressive return here to the LPGA Tour. A little bit of an up and down start though. Three birdies, three bogeys on the front. What was the biggest difference for you today?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I would say that I missed a few fairways on the front, so, I mean, on this course if you're in the rough and then it's hard to get the ball onto the green in regulation.

I just missed a few up and downs but I still think overall I was pretty good. I think I had like six or seven birdies today.

Q. You talked yesterday about how much you relied on your long time caddie, Mercer Leftwich, who you like to call your boss. How will you two work together to come up with a game plan for this weekend?

SHANSHAN FENG: You know what? My plan was to come back and enjoy the whole time that I'm on the course, and now I have two more days that I can enjoy with my team, my boss, and also my playing partners in the group. So I'm very happy about that.

Result-wise it doesn't really matter because I'm very happy about what I'm doing as the first tournament coming back.

Q. As you walked over you said you got a lot of reaction from people for your interview yesterday talking about your plan in quarantine. I have to ask you, what's for dinner tonight?

SHANSHAN FENG: I don't know. I might just grab a quick dinner and go to bed. Last night I slept for 14 hours so I guess I'm more tired than what I looked like. There has been a lot of food and then sleep.

Q. All right, Shanshan, let's talk about first this front nine that you had a little bit of a rollercoaster but then able to maintain yourself. What was going right for you and what did you learn about that front nine today that was different than yesterday?



SHANSHAN FENG: Yes, well, you know, I didn't really expect myself to shoot a bogey-free round yesterday, so I expect on this course, especially my first tournament coming back, I am going to have some mistakes.

And so, you know, I just missed a few fairways and few up and downs and so I made some bogeys. I was very like fine with it because I expected it. But I felt really happy that after that, I mean, I started to hit more fairways on the back, so be able to hit more greens and have more birdie chances.

And, so, yeah, coming back on the back nine I think was pretty well done.

Q. Closed with two birdies today, back-to-back birdies on 17 and 18. What does that do for your confidence in just your second competitive round since 2019?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I'm feeling so happy that I can play two more rounds. I've done pretty well in the first two rounds, so hopefully just keep doing the same thing and hopefully keep enjoying. I think that's the most important thing, yeah.

Q. I know you said to the Golf Channel about what you plan on doing to get ready for the weekend. You had a little bit of sleep to prepare for today, as well, didn't you?

SHANSHAN FENG: Yeah, every day this week I've been sleeping at least like from anywhere to nine to ten hours, and yesterday, last night, I had maybe 14 hour of sleep.

So really slept a lot. Didn't want to, but I just was laying on the bed and then my eyes were closing. I was like, okay, just let them go, and just fell asleep. Yeah, but I feel like my body is very good, recovered after that, so that's my way I guess to heal.

Q. It's one thing to come back in your first outing and play well for one round; it's another to come back and play well for two rounds. How do you keep that going throughout the next two rounds?

SHANSHAN FENG: I didn't really focus on how I was playing. I was trying to find out, you know, the same



feeling like how I was reacting on the course and if I was enjoying everything on the course.

So like yesterday people said coming into this booth they couldn't tell if I shot 5-under or 5-over, so still the same. I mean, all I can say is that I really enjoy the whole time on the course. Doesn't matter if I was playing well or not.

So I think that's the most important thing. That was what I was kind of missing before my break, this long-time break.

Q. A lot of people don't use the word fun with a major championship. It's a grind, it's challenging every part of your game. You seem to be having a really good time out there.

SHANSHAN FENG: Yeah.

Q. How do you do that?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I would say that of course, I mean, everybody wants to play well in majors, but to myself, I try to play well in every tournament. I see all the tournaments the same. Doesn't matter. It's just the prize money a little bit different to me.

I just have to give it my 100% every time. Yeah, and as long as I do that, doesn't matter if I play well or not. You know, I just -- I'm fine with that.

Q. Listening to you talk it sounds as if you really needed the mental break that last year accidentally provided. Is there something to be said for being able to restart and come out fresh when you're used to grinding and not being home very much?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I would say that, yeah, that break really helped. You know, some people said I already retire for a year and this is a coming back after one year retirement.

But I just looked at it as a break myself. I would say that 2018, '19, yes, I did struggle a little bit, because, I mean, as the age getting a little bit older and older, I mean, my distance is getting shorter and shorter. I used to be a long hitter on the tour. Used to be. Not anymore.

I saw all the young girls, I mean, they don't look that big but they just carry the ball so far. And I was -- it was so hard for me to catch up with them. I think mentally I was a little bit stressful. I gave myself a little pressure.

But I think after the break, you know, I talked to myself, I said, Hey, even though you're not as long as the other girls are, you know how to play well. So I think I proved that

these two days and I'm happy about what I've done.

Q. So you said that if not for the visa issues you would've come back earlier. What would've been the tournament in a perfect world that you would have returned for?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, doesn't really matter. I was trying to come back for Kia.

Q. Got it.

SHANSHAN FENG: Yeah, I just missed a little bit.

Q. And can you explain to those of us who haven't had to deal with the bureaucratic red tape, what did getting visa require and what was the problem?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I mean the only thing was just the embassies were canceling all the appointments. That was it.

Q. Got you.

SHANSHAN FENG: It was the only thing. It's fair to everybody.

Q. Is that in China or in the U.S.?

SHANSHAN FENG: In China.

Q. Got it, got it. Thank you, so no preferential treatment for athletes?

SHANSHAN FENG: No, no. I think everybody was trying their best and our best to try to come back as soon as possible, and, yeah, I'm here. (Laughter.)

Q. In this position a lot of people would be trying to take it seriously. To Steve's point you seem like you're just really enjoying yourself. As a player having a lot of success this week, how do you stay true to yourself? Obviously you really enjoy it.

SHANSHAN FENG: Sorry, I missed the last part.

Q. How do you stay true to yourself out there? How do you kind of keep it Shanshan?

SHANSHAN FENG: I would say that I normally -- I really enjoy talking, chatting with my boss, Mercer again, chatting with my boss on the course, and I think when I am maybe out of my zone I think he will try to get me back.

And also I think I try not looking at the leaderboards, and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

not focusing on the scores and just focus on the process.
That's what I normally do.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

And also I would say that, you know, I'm really not focusing on the scores at all. I'm just so happy to come back. I will be playing with two new players tomorrow and that's fantastic. I miss all of them.

Q. What's been the fresh perspective for you out here this week? Obviously you took a year off. We all know that. Having seen the other side of life, does it give you a new perspective heading into the weekend at a major?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, it's -- I don't think so. I think I've had plenty of sleep and good food, and I think I'm very relaxed on the course, too. You know what I said to my playing partners today on the 18th, I was like, after finish I said, Yay, I made the cut. So I was actually happy about making the cut and be able to play two more rounds. Other than that, anything.

Q. Quick Olympic question. When the Olympics were postponed last year were you thinking, well, there goes my chance to play in another and improve upon my finish in '16? Where are you in your headspace as far as Tokyo goes?

SHANSHAN FENG: Well, I would say that, yes, I thought that I would already finish -- I mean, competed last year in Tokyo.

Q. Yeah.

SHANSHAN FENG: But it's the same situation to everybody and I think it's very fair that they actually stopped the ranking, froze the rankings. So my ranking hasn't been changed since March last year.

Coming back, you know, all I want to do is to get warmed up for the Olympics, and my goal is to try to represent my country and be able to go to Tokyo this year.

Q. You were already so famous for your bronze medal. I don't know what more you could -- how much more famous you could become.

SHANSHAN FENG: I think even though, yes, I did get a bronze medal last time, I would say that we are athletes. Even though I don't look exactly like an athlete by looking-wise, but I am an athlete. I think all the athletes, we want to be the best in the world. Even though I got a bronze, well, if this time I can play maybe we can try to go for the gold. Who knows, right?