

# Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

## Rose Zhang

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, very pleased to be joined by one-time 2024 winner, two-time tour winner, Rose Zhang. Just take us through the offseason. What did you get into? I know you're busy with school. How has that been going, balancing that and playing a little bit?

ROSE ZHANG: I've actually been having a really good offseason so far. I think especially with last two years being super hectic, I kind of took some time off and reflected a little bit on how I operated, how my systems were.

I touched base with my entire team so we did a little camp together right before I headed out here. I'm currently at school for winter quarter, so 22 units is definitely a hefty load. It's good now that I can be in person and kind of prioritize that in the offseason.

So it's keeping me busy. I'm just thinking about how to better myself for this upcoming season.

**Q. You talked a lot about school. What have you done golf-wise to prepare for this week, knowing we're probably not going to see you a little bit because you're finishing up winter quarter.**

ROSE ZHANG: 100%. Yeah, I've been just maneuvering my way through offseason, trying to rest my body as much as possible. I had a little bit of a wrist injury following Solheim and just played through it, which didn't help my situation.

I think today was my sixth time ever practicing, second time on a golf course itself. So I'm kind of keeping it low expectations, zero expectations to be fair, and going out there and trying to learn the best from my game.

That's my priority for this entire week. It's so great to be able to be with celebrities and have the short of environment. I'm super excited about it.



And then I'll have two months off essentially just being at school.

I've got an AJGA tournament to host which I'm super excited about. Couple of my friends are actually playing in it, which would be really, really fun to witness and get to see.

Then I just start my season in Arizona.

**Q. Leaning into the celebrity aspect of this tournament you've obviously rubbed shoulders with plenty of celebrities over your short time as a professional, backing up to the amateur days as well. Anybody who you're particularly excited to meet or try to get to play with? Who was on your roster of the names you want to play tournament rounds with?**

ROSE ZHANG: To be honest I went through the list and I don't think any of them are too far off of my list.

There is a couple people that were from Summit in Las Vegas and it would have been fun to play with them. Dexter is one of those players. He's in the field this week. I've seen him at Summit before. Would've been fun. He brings out really good vibes. I rode in the van with him today and he said he was a 3 handicap, so he would probably show me up a little bit.

**Q. How about just getting ready for the season, going back to school, if you will, on that topic? Everybody is messing around with different items that come out from club manufacturers. Anything you've gotten to play with and maybe experiment with this week?**

ROSE ZHANG: Exactly, this week, in my opinion I think if there is anything to experiment with it's this week you really get into tournament play. It's early in the year. You get to try out some of the equipment that you got to see in offseason.

For me personally, I have a new putter in the bag so I'm going to see how that works, see how that looks when I'm out there.



And then Callaway has the new Elite equipment so I have those in the bag. Been working really well so far.

Other than that, it's kind of just blind eye going into it and then we'll work it out from there.

**Q. Since you brought up the putter, when you are looking at the mechanics of a putt, something specific to improve your game, what specifically do you like when it comes to how you feel over the ball?**

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, so the first thing I think about, which I kind of struggled with last year, was the setup to the ball in general.

When you have a really comfortable setup or when you get a really consistent setup that's when you have the most confidence over a putt and you can just execute accordingly.

I kind of wiggled around with my grip. I couldn't really understand where my head was, where I was aiming in alignment.

That kind of took a toll on the strokes gained in my game. So this year I'm trying to more focus on the consistency of just setup and having a head that helps me set up to where I want to be or at least be more consistent with it. That's the number one key.

Putting in general requires consistency. If you can't stand up to the ball and be consistent there, it's hard to have good putts come out of it.

**Q. Can you talk about some of mentors you've had in the game of golf who helped you achieve the level of success you achieved at such a young age?**

ROSE ZHANG: Right. There is a lot actually. I think a lot of people that came or I crossed paths with have all been very inspirational to me and I've been very pleased to have people who can guide me in that sense.

For instance when I was in junior golf at the ANA Junior Inspiration, Annika Sorenstam was there and talked to the entire field. I got to talk to her and interview her in a small AJGA clip, which was very inspiring.

Then I went over to college golf and I really felt a lot of the mentorship from my head coach, Coach Walker. She's been very, very pivotal in my ability to come out on Tour and have a little bit of a transition.

And then I would say now on Tour, when I was making that decision of what I wanted to do, Michelle was a person that

really inspired and kind of she just helped me guide my decisions or gave her input on her experiences while being in college and on Tour, to which I really took it to heart.

So I'm glad that I'm doing what I'm doing now. These people have all provided some input. Then you obviously got family, friends, and coaches. Todd Anderson, George Pinnell, all these people have been great to me.

**Q. You seem so seasoned for being so young. I'm interested in what the biggest adjustment you've had to make since joining the tour?**

ROSE ZHANG: There is a lot of the navigation in my opinion when it comes to transitioning on tour. I think even though when you come out very hot, it seemed like you're seasoned in your game. In reality I realized it was a lot of the adrenaline and I was just doing things in the most random orders.

Being on Tour, having a schedule, a team that holds you accountable and also having people around you that are accountable for just what they're doing to help you is very important.

I kind of had to understand that a little bit and slowly adjust to make sure that I come out every single week with the most preparation.

Sometimes with the travel, with so many obligations you get sidetracked easily and don't really feel the most prepared when it comes to actually playing on Thursday.

Then if you play well or decent you play through Sunday, potentially are in contention. Sometimes that preparation is where it gets a little bit lost, and that was the biggest transition that I tried to make, at least for this upcoming year as well.

**Q. How do you manage to juggle studying now, going back to school and playing pro golf?**

ROSE ZHANG: Right. It's a lot of work. I think one mistake that I made last year was when I had an offseason and I was at school full time with 20 units. I had a couple hard classes and I lost a lot of sleep. I didn't really take care of myself. I was trying to practice the same amount I was on Tour and also being in school in that sense, which was a lot to load.

So this year was more to balance out my entire lifestyle. It's just a lot of work in school, academia, getting assignments out of the way easier, and then I can kind of lay low, practice a little bit when I feel like it.

More so the fitness level, fitness side is where I'm kind of looking towards grinding a little bit more on. I think that will make up for a lot and help me rest up for the rest of the year. It's a long season.

**Q. Sometimes the busier you are the more organized you have to be and that can be helpful.**

ROSE ZHANG: Right. Exactly. My goal calendars, structured app is really helping me right now.

**Q. My question is kind of following up on that. You talk about managing the stresses. What is your plan of attack as the year goes on balancing school and also trying to get back in form and playing your best?**

ROSE ZHANG: Right. I think I really like how my schedule is playing out right now, because I'm full time, 22 units into winter quarter. But it's only ten weeks, so I will be -- actually the week before Arizona would be my finals week, which is really nice because I'll get to finish everything that I need to and then prioritizing that, putting that to the side and getting ready for the entire season.

It's kind of like me tackling one thing at a time. There is a lot of multi-tasking when it comes to golf and performance. Just making sure that I have the times of working out, the times of just planning out my schedule, practicing with the structure. These are all things I'm kind of figuring out which will ultimately, no matter what happens in terms of score, at least get me organized to where I want to be or see what factors I can work on.

**Q. Best of luck compartmentalizing all that.**

ROSE ZHANG: Thank you.

**Q. With all you have going on do you ever think, why am I doing all this?**

ROSE ZHANG: Yes. I always do. You know, a lot of people would ask me, but I do think it is really, really good for my character. Really good for just my personal development in general.

It's very difficult and I'm not really sure if there is a right option to just turn pro and just play golf or finish my degree. In my opinion I think this is a good balance for what I'm striving for.

It's not necessarily the most popular route but it's definitely a good route in my eyes.

**Q. When you were here last year you talked about trying to sort through some things with your health**

**and diet. How would you assess where your health is heading into this season?**

ROSE ZHANG: It's so much better. I feel really excited about it just because I learned how much. Stress really impacts me, especially when you come off adrenaline to tournaments. I would argue that my entire season was kind of filled with adrenaline.

Being able to lay low a little bit and understand what it means to at least reorganize myself in that sense, it really made a huge impact to how I feel right now.

I would say I've got a lot of good people on the team who really prioritize me and everything that I'm doing. They're very supportive. So those people are really holding me to everything and including taking care of myself. So I'm getting more sleep, and that helps with balancing everything as well.

**Q. How much sleep do you usually get a night?**

ROSE ZHANG: Seven, eight hours are pretty standard. I'm taking a sleep and dreams class at Stanford and it's honestly one of the most popular classes. Priority for seniors, which I am a senior now which is actually insane.

You get bonus points if you fall asleep in class. You get squirted by a squirt gun and you have to stand up and you have to tell the whole class, drowsiness is red alert. It's our mantra. (Laughing.)

**Q. (No microphone.)**

ROSE ZHANG: No. I'm very, very shy in class. I don't think I can handle that much pressure. One point won't get you anywhere, to be honest.

**Q. You mentioned that AJGA event. What kind of details can you share about that? Have you got to pick Nelly's brain a little bit after she hosted The Nelly last year?**

ROSE ZHANG: I probably should do that, to be honest. AJGA has a special place in my heart. I've grown up playing with when I was 13 until 18, basically when I graduated. I met so many people there. Some people on Tour now who I played with in AJGA are my really close friends. I want to have the invitational be an environment where it's not only competitive, but they can gain some inspiration from the tournament itself.

We got some good gifts for the kids that are playing, and it kind of reminds me of myself. I'm really excited to do some Q and As with them, the players.

Something to add on is I'm planning on doing a seminar for the parents just because I feel like the parents, they always travel with the children, the kids, and they're emotionally invested in them as well and want the best for their children.

So with that development, if they have in the questions I feel like it's an open room and platform to be able to do so.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports