

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Rose Zhang

Quick Quotes

Q. Here with Rose Zhang after her first round at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions. Just take me through the day today. Lots of scores on your card. Birdies, bogeys. Tell me about the day.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, that was kind of an up and down round. I felt like I had a lot of positives coming out of it. Starting off 2025 with a birdie is always really nice. Kind of got into the groove of it. Towards the middle of the round my swing got a little wonky. Just had a couple shots that were a little bit more poorly executed.

But coming down the stretch still very positive and very satisfied with how I kept myself in the moment throughout the round.

So not really anything to be super over the head about, but I'm also really pleased given this is my third round back on the golf course in two months.

Q. Yeah. I was going to say, I know you talked yesterday about you're in a lot of school right now and haven't been practicing. What sort of things did you do to prepare for coming back to competition maybe not on the golf course?

ROSE ZHANG: Right. I kind of got my head straight on what I wanted my objectives to be throughout the year, especially this year.

I try to keep my process very simple and just try to get myself the most prepared I can be. To be honest, you never really know what the golf course what can bring to you, even when you are in top peak form.

I think just coming out of school and coming here, it was more the simple objective of getting things done, preparing as much as I can and then executing the way I should.

So it wasn't really anything too crazy of a mindset, but proved to be effective. I hope to take it into the future as



well.

Q. You have to be satisfied having only played, what was this, your third round?

ROSE ZHANG: I played the practice round on Tuesday and the pro-am on Wednesday, so third round back.

Q. You said you didn't have a whole lot of expectation. Did in some ways you surpass your expectations given how little you've played?

ROSE ZHANG: Just a little bit. At the same time, I could still see a lot of rust. Some shots that I knew I could execute, ended up chunking and leaving 25 yards short.

So I've done some things out there that is a little bit shaky, a little bit questionable. I think it's really heading into the right direction. My mind is in a good spot to just learn about things and continue that learning curve.

I feel like I missed out on that last year a little bit.

Q. So when will you graduate?

ROSE ZHANG: So I'm technically a senior right now. My class is 2025. It will extend to 2027 because I'm only doing winter quarters, and I have to take 20 units for each of those winter quarters that I'll be in school.

Q. So is there like a ceremony you would walk in like the spring of 2027?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, that's more what I was thinking. A lot of my friends are walking this spring actually, but some of them are also co-termining, they're doing their masters programs; some of them had a gap year, so they're coming back and finishing out.

A lot of cool things are happening in universities right now. A lot of startups being built; AI is booming. It's really cool to just witness that. I'm not really in the athletic world anymore so a lot of my friends are really cracking down on some coding and some cool projects.



Q. And then one more. Since you're not practicing as much are you being a fun college student a little bit? Are you enjoying night life a little bit or mostly studying?

ROSE ZHANG: It's mostly studying. I'm taking 22 units so does take up quite a bit of time, and also I'm prioritizing sleep a little bit more.

I already have a really good friend circle so when I do go out I end up eating instead of drinking, and drinking is not really my thing either.

Even when I was a freshman, a sophomore student, I still didn't go out with my teammates as much. They would pick on me a little bit. It's all for fun.

Q. Curious, because this is kind of a one off, does that give you a chance to maybe freewheel a little bit? Do you put more pressure on yourself because it's one time before you go back to school?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, so my approach to this entire week is to just get as prepared as possible, do the things that I need to do in terms of routine.

Of course I'm going to work hard this week. That's the goal for me. Just to be able to complete this week with no regrets and tell myself I'm going to be executing on every single shot.

And then if things don't work out well for me, I have two months to really, really crack down on my mechanics and working with my coaches, trainers, to get myself in contention throughout the year.

So this is kind of, I wouldn't say check point because I still am very competitive. I will say that it allows me to work on the process going further down the road.

Q. When you are taking the 22 hours, how often do you get a chance to pull the clubs out?

ROSE ZHANG: Wait, sorry? Repeat that.

Q. When you go back to campus, you say you're going to practice and get ready. How often do you get the chance when you're pulling 22 hours worth of studies?

ROSE ZHANG: Right. There is a fine line I think. I'm going to try my best in between just my classes to find a balance point of going on the range, going putting, chipping. I think the priority will definitely be working out and short game.

That's the first thing that really leaves you when you're in the offseason and not really grinding. The swing can always come back in my opinion if your body is in shape and fit enough to understand what you're doing in terms of mechanics.

So I think my time will be spent with quality rather than a lot of quantity. That's what I really did last year that took a blow on me in terms of both mentally and physically.

Q. Are you a baseball fan?

ROSE ZHANG: It was so fun. Aaron and John are amazing. Obviously John being a Hall of Famer and Aaron just driving the ball over 360. I kept laughing at him. On 14 he was like, oh, is this 3-wood too far? I'm like, I can't even get there with driver. I'm like 50 yards away.

So it was really cool to just get to witness that. I didn't even know that the sports leagues had a little bit of a golf Ryder Cup format. It's super cool to see these players in other sports play golf. It's very inspirational actually.

I can't do anything they're doing.

Q. How do you injure your wrist and how long did it bother you?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, so it's a reoccurring issue that I had. Back in 2020, 2021 I don't think anyone was super aware, but I was an amateur just trying to get to Stanford. I was trying to hold my place. The pressures of college really gets you.

It was during COVID. I was hitting way too many balls on super thin mat in the garage. Got wrist impingement, but then I had to play throughout the season when golf started opening up after quarantine. I was popping four Advils in the morning, four Advils in the evening just to kind of maintain what I was doing.

It turned out to be one of the best years in my amateur career. I won the U.S. Women's Am, I won all my AJGA invitational, played well at ANA. That really catches up to you, especially when you're so high on adrenaline, even in college.

So last year it kind of caught up to me and I decided to really just clubs away, rest a little bit. So we're still in the process of healing.

Q. And how many balls did you hit in the garage off the thin mat?

ROSE ZHANG: 400. Every day. So I was really just not

being smart. There were no classes either. It was online. I was a junior in high school. Had nothing better to do. Not good.

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