

The LPGA Drive On Championship presented by Volvik

Friday, March 5, 2021

Ocala, Florida, USA

Golden Ocala

Ashleigh Buhai

Quick Quotes

Q. Ashleigh, second straight round of 2-under. Keeping it steady. You're in a good spot heading into the weekend. How did it feel to put that number up today?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, I was really happy with the way I finished. My front nine was a little shaky. But the course is playing difficult. Greens are firm so it's tough to get it close.

But I stayed patient, started to hit some good shots on the back nine, and converted them when I had the chance. Super happy to finish under par.

Q. And you mentioned how firm the greens are. Did they even change in the amount of time you were out there this morning from maybe a little dew on them to the nice 70 degree temps this afternoon?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Not too much. I think what helped is I played super late yesterday. I thought they might be a little softer, but I found that out quickly on the 1st hole they weren't when I went long.

I managed to adjust. The wind kind of swirls around here too, so you have to pick that up. It was just about staying super patient and hit to the big spots. When I had a wedge in my hand I took advantage of it.

Q. You mentioned on the walk over here you found a spot in the U.S. to call home base. How good does that feel and where are you at?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, it feels good. I mean, obviously miss not being able to go back to South Africa, but I think it's going to be really good for me. It's going to give me a sense of somewhere to go on my off weeks and not living out a suitcase all the time.

I used to play so much because I didn't have anywhere to



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go kind of thing. I'm going to be able to plan my schedule a little bit better and rest up more.

Q. What are you looking forward to this weekend? A little rain coming in. Do you think that maybe opens up the leaderboard for really anybody?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: It may because the course is going to soften up and may make the approach shots a little bit easier. Contending with other elements it's going to play a little longer.

So kind of just stick to the same game plan and see where it goes.

Q. So where is your home U.S. base?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Palm Beach Gardens.

Q. What course are you practicing out of?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Hobe Sound.

Q. So are you practicing with some of the other South Africans down there in that area?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Well, I've managed to play with a lot of them and all the guys. I played a bit with Ernie, which has been cool. Brandon Grace who won last week. Erik van Rooyen and I have the same coach, so it's been fun to play with the guys and have some banter and talk about good South African stuff.

Q. Did you take any money off any of them?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I did. (Laughter.)

Q. What kind of games do you play?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Just like 50/50 kind of per nine and \$50 on the game. My first round out was fun. I played with Ernie and Brandon and I had nine birdies around, so they were pretty impressed with that.

I hadn't touched a club in four weeks, so that was fun.



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Q. Wow. Oh, my god.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Playing at Turtle Creek. So at least I held my own against them.

Q. How much did you pocket that day?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I think it was only like 50 bucks because of all the different (indiscernible) going around, so it's all good. Come away with something.

Q. What is your earliest recollection of watching Ernie play?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: So I would say it was around the '98 South African Open. Was being played at Glendower. Ernie has always been my idol, and the Glendower golf course is literally five minutes from my house.

I had a life-size poster of Ernie in my room growing up and he signed it for me.

Q. That's awesome.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, that is probably my first recollection. Got to meet him many times over the years, but it's been really cool hanging out and getting to know him even more now.

Q. Did you think that was kind of untouchable being able to like play casual golf with Ernie at some point?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, it was. It was funny, when I tee'd it up with him and even Brandon I felt at ease, which was cool. I wasn't nervous. My husband Dave got to play. I think he was more excited than me and he held his own, too so it was cool.

Q. What your favorite replica hole out here and how close are they?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I think the Postage Stamp. I loved Royal Troon last year. I'd say it's my favorite links golf course I've played to date. I played it pretty well in Scotland, so I think the memories come back.

It's pretty similar. I mean, the green isn't as severe and maybe plays a little bit longer and doesn't run off as much on the right. It's a little bit more forgiving, but on the eye it's a very cool looking hole.

Q. And the bunkers, how do they compare?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, I was in one today. They're a little bit easier. I got up and down. I remember being in

the right front bunker at Royal Troon and then it was just the case get it out and take your fall; whereas today I managed to make up and down.

But it's fun.

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