

The Ascendant LPGA benefiting Volunteers of America

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

The Colony, Texas, USA

Golf Clubs at The Tribute

Maddie Szeryk

Ellie Szeryk

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Maddie and Ellie Szeryk. Welcome to the Ascendant LPGA benefiting Volunteers of America.

The last time we talked to both of you was another home event, the CPKC Women's Open earlier this year. Just how are we both feeling coming back to another quote/unquote home event, Ellie being at SMU and Maddie being a member here?

MADDIE SZERYK: Yeah, it's pretty exciting that we get to play in another tournament together. Two in one year is huge, and we're just very thankful for the opportunity for her to be here as well, and just really looking forward to it.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah, it was awesome. This tournament wasn't even really on my radar. I thought Canadian Open would just kind of be it for me, and then just get ready for Q-School.

Just the last couple weeks our coaches have been mentioning it, so it was such a nice surprise to be able to share this with my sister again.

Q. Ellie, we learned that SMU was having a play-in tournament and you got second I believe. Just what was that like getting to compete with your teammates and eventually getting into the field anyway?

ELLIE SZERYK: It was really cool because the other girl who ended up winning it and getting an exemption, we had been speaking all year about, hey, next year let's do Q-School. Like we couldn't wait to travel and always speaking about wanting to go on the LPGA.

So the fact that we had this surprise exemption into this tournament was so cool for the both of us because it was like a trial run for hopefully when we are on the LPGA one



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day.

So obviously it was really intense when we were playing, but it was just such a surreal moment for the both of us.

Q. Ellie, this will be your second start this year, as you mentioned. What did you learn about yourself and your game maybe at CPKC that you've been working on to this point?

ELLIE SZERYK: A lot of course management. I gained a lot of confidence from the Canadian Open. Although I missed the cut, it just made me realize I can compete out here. If I just learned how to play an LPGA-level courses I'll be all right.

I think as a junior and amateur you always think that you're so far away from being able to play at the LPGA level. Obviously I play with Maddie, but I put Maddie on such a higher level than I am, and so it's just kind of cool. Like, hey I'm really not that far off.

Q. And then Maddie, member here at Old American Golf Club. Do you feel a sense of home court advantage? A lot of players have said this is a tricky course, so getting to play this day in, day out, how comfortable do you feel here?

MADDIE SZERYK: It's huge getting home course advantage. Some of the lines might be tighter, but I play them all the time so you can be bit more aggressive and know that you've hit the shot 20 times instead of a normal practice round where you only get to see it twice or so.

So it's really cool that I'm like, okay, I feel really comfortable, get to stay at home, and just a little bit more of a normal routine.

Q. Absolutely. I think we talked about it in Canada, is there any teasing and stuff when you guys play together? You got to play officially in your opening round I believe at CPKC. How special was that, and was there any back and forth, some jabs as you guys were going?

MADDIE SZERYK: I don't think there was too much on the course. There was definitely some trash talking before. We played a practice round together, too, and knocking the

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ball off the tee and just making fun of each other.

But I think this week is more normal in a way. We're like, okay, see you at the course.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah, it's not nearly as weird as it was at the Canadian. Obviously we joke around, like if I hit it further than Maddie, because Maddie always hit it further than me like my entire childhood, so I would always like make jokes at her and be like, Maddie, got to hit the gym.

But like now it's just kind of normal. It's like, oh, there's my sister. Whereas last -- at Canadian Open it was like, oh, my gosh my sister is here. (Laughter.)

Q. Being a professional golfer what goes into your training routine?

MADDIE SZERYK: A lot of practice, workouts, just keeping the body in shape and ready. Golf, it's not like a contact sport but it still takes a toll on your body, and if you want to have a long career you have to make sure you're not injured all the time and just eating well and a lot of practice.

Getting good sleep, too.

ELLIE SZERYK: I'm not a professional, but, yeah, same thing: Just a lot of maintenance work. We spend hours just practicing on not perfecting it, but getting as good as we can, and eating well and lots of workouts.

I think people are surprised about that. When we speak to other athletes they're like, you guys go to the gym? That's so weird. But it's just to make sure our bodies don't go out of place, because we are moving our bodies in a way that's not really normal.

Like I have problems, my ribs always come out of place, and so trying to work out to make sure they don't. A lot of it is just making sure our bodies can function?

Q. When you play against each other is the competitive motivation kind of different from other tournaments?

ELLIE SZERYK: Oh, yeah. We come from a very competitive household, so we've been super competitive since we were babies essentially. It's just different. Like obviously when I'm on the golf course I'm trying to beat everyone I play with, but when it's my older sister I'm going to go a little bit harder.

MADDIE SZERYK: Yeah. When it's not like a tournament day it's like, oh, yeah. We play like head games all the

time and it's very competitive. Just kind of like have fun with it, too.

Q. The day that ya'll play in a tournament, what's the pre-game routine look like?

MADDIE SZERYK: I usually get here -- I start practicing like an hour and 20 before my tee time. I eat breakfast and see the physio before, so usually I am pulling in two hours before my tee time.

Once I start practicing, I putt, I go chip, I hit balls, and then I go back to putting and tee off.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah, mine is very similar because I got my routine from her.

MADDIE SZERYK: Yeah. It was funny, when we played together in Canada, we literally had the exact same routine. Okay, we're on the putting green together, then we moved to chipping, then the range. Yeah, identical.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah. Because our dad kind of told us the routine, and then I saw Maddie do it and I was like all right, it worked for her, so, yeah, it's just the exact same.

Q. So is it hard to balance the training side of golf with the marketing side, with the press and the sponsorships? Is that difficult?

MADDIE SZERYK: It can be because you want to do so much for the sponsors that are supporting you. And like pro-am days as well. You're spread thin. We travel all the time. It's like, okay, when I'm done with those I go back to my room and just relax.

You have to find the balance, but you have to like do these things for sponsorships, and you want to do those things because they're helping you.

It is a hard balance, but you have to then prioritize, okay, maybe I'm not going to go out and do that extra thing. I'm just going to relax and do what I need to.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah, I don't have any, so...

Q. What's the most challenging aspect of being a professional golfer?

MADDIE SZERYK: Balancing the travel and everything. Last year was my first year, and just figuring out, okay, I have to book my hotel, I have to book the plane and the rental car, hotel, everything, and just balancing.

It's very overwhelming at first, but I think you just kind of



ask around, okay, what's the best airport to fly into? What day do I get there? Just find a good team around you.

I think the travel aspect is the hardest part, but if you have a good group of friends it gets better.

ELLIE SZERYK: I think you're just never home. That was the really weird thing when Maddie first started playing professional, was like I'll see you in three months maybe. Yeah, luckily we can FaceTime and text all the time.

I think a lot of it is just you have to live out of a hotel which I think is quite tough, and also really cool at the same time, because you get to see the whole world.

Q. Ellie, you're going to have a lot of your SMU teammates here. How much will you lean on them this week?

ELLIE SZERYK: Oh, man, it'll be a lot of fun. It's going to be the exact same thing as playing with Maddie. I know they'll be harassing me the entire time and making jokes.

It will be just really comforting knowing I have so many family and friends out here. I think a lot of my classmates and friends from SCA will come out and support, which will be really cool and really special because we don't really have that in college golf because we're traveling to other schools.

So I'm really excited.

Q. This is a question for Maddie. Obviously an exciting week having Ellie around. Important week for you as well based on where you are on the Race to CME Globe. How are you going to compartmentalize having fun this week, but also knowing you got a big job to do this week?

MADDIE SZERYK: Yeah, it's hard, you know, coming down the final stretch and needing a good finish, but I feel like I've done everything I can. It's nice having the extra support here as well and being at home and comfortable on the golf course.

At the end of the day it's another tournament, and I can't think about, okay, the season is almost over. I need to play well. I feel like I've done everything I can and it's just another week. I can't make it bigger than it is. Just have to have fun and do my best.

Q. And just a quick follow-up for the both of you. Obviously both been part of Golf Canada's National team and Canadian golf over the last 12 months has had an incredible run on any tour, any stage on the pro

side. Can you just speak to your time on Golf Canada's National Team and how it's maybe helped you get to this point?

MADDIE SZERYK: Yeah, I've been a part of Golf Canada for a really long time now. They've helped me through each stage, college, amateur career, and then transitioning into pro life. They've been there every step.

They have everything we need in mentalists, physio, all the coaches, they're all there for us. And the financial part is awesome too, because golf is really expensive and if you don't play well you don't make money, so then you can't keep going.

So they've been really huge in getting me to this point.

ELLIE SZERYK: Yeah, and I haven't experienced Golf Canada professional-wise, but for the junior and amateur squad they really help us by giving us different experiences. So even before I've played in LPGA events I was playing in tournaments overseas where I was used to dealing with pressure and with crazy weather and all that stuff when I came over here.

I think they just do a really good job of preparing us for the next level, and we are definitely very fortunate to have their support.

THE MODERATOR: That'll do it. Thank you so much.

MADDIE SZERYK: Thank you.

ELLIE SZERYK: Thank you.

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