

LPGA MEDIHEAL Championship

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Daly City, California, USA

Lake Merced Country Club

Rachel Heck

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everyone inside the virtual media center here at the LPGA MEDIHEAL Championship.

Here with sponsor invite Rachel Heck. You're coming off an incredible week at the U.S. Women's Open. Just take me through your experience at the Olympic Club.

RACHEL HECK: It was absolutely incredible. First of all, the course was amazing. I mean, it's the Olympic Club, so I was just stoked get even to play the course.

You know I got to play practice rounds with one of my really good greens Lucy Li and other incredible pros. Yeah, I had a little bit of a rough day Thursday. Had a nice comeback on Friday to just barely sneak inside the cut line.

The weekend was just a blast. No pressure. Just so much fun. And on Sunday was paired with Lydia Ko, which was amazing. I was refreshing all of Saturday because I had finished and I was like, Please par this hole so we can be paired together.

She was absolutely incredible. She is one of my biggest role models, so to actually be able to play with her on Sunday at a U.S. Open was unreal.

THE MODERATOR: I was standing outside of the scoring tent when you came off together and I remember how excited you looked, and you said, Can we take a picture together? How awesome is it to be kind of on this roll of good golf you've been playing?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, my gosh, it's been a blast. I've just soaked it all in. Runs like these don't come often in golf, so you just got to -- you just got to enjoy every second of it while it's happening, so not trying to put too much pressure on yourself and just enjoy it.

Yeah when Lydia and I came out of the scoring tent all the fans are waiting outside. I said, Okay, first fan, take a picture with me first before you go to your other fans,

because I'm a big fan. So, yeah, when you're playing that well and giving you the opportunity to play players like her, that the real reward of it. It's awesome.

THE MODERATOR: That's incredible to hear with a smile on your face. The we were talking off camera. That wasn't the first time you had played Olympic. You had played it a little bit before for a college tournament which you had won, an 18-hole tournament. How different was the course do you feel like when you played that college tournament to the major championship?

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, it was super different. It was kind of funny, we had 18 holes; I shot 66. Everyone was, Oh, my gosh, you're going to go do that at the Open, and it was not even similar. The rough was nothing compared to how was it last week. The fairways were a lot softer, so if you landed on part of the fairway it would just stay there instead of rolling off into the rough.

It was a very different course. It was great to get to see it, but it was playing much more difficult last week.

THE MODERATOR: Did anyone in particular come up to you during the week where you were like, Oh, my gosh, this is so cool, they're coming up to me. Maybe congratulating you on the ANNIKA Award or the NCAA championship?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, my gosh, yes. It was so cool. Every pro, I think I saw Lexi first, and she said, Oh, my gosh, congratulations Rachel. I was taken aback.

And then we were, yeah, on a par-3 waiting and Danielle Kang was in the group behind me and came up and said, Hi, Rachel. I really wanted to meet and you say hi. I was like, I want to meet you. I'm a really big fan.

And then the Kordas were in the next group and I was walking up the fairway while they were going back to the tee and Jessica said, Hey, Rachel, and I just fan-girling over here seeing all my idols say hi like it's casual.

So it's really cool how much the pros care about just

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women's golf as a whole and amateur golf as a whole. They're just so welcoming every professional tournament I get to play. It's just awesome.

THE MODERATOR: What does it mean to come from an exciting week like that to continue your stretch of golf here at the MEDIHEAL Championship this week?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, it's such a great experience. Just a little taste of tour life a couple weeks, seeing how the pros do it. It's definitely tiring. I have so much respect for what they do week after week.

I'm coming off a long stretch and I'm so exhausted, but I can't wait to get this week started. I'm paired with Michelle the next couple days, which I'm stoked about. It's going to be a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: I was about to ask about that, that Stanford connection. When you saw the pairings last night, what was the first thing that popped into your head?

RACHEL HECK: It was really funny. I was taking a nap because like I said I was exhausted, and I woke up to a text from Michelle. Yay, see you Thursday. I was like, What? No way.

Then I checked the pairings and saw we were paired together. If you told me a few years ago that I would be playing with Michelle Wie West at an LPGA event and I'd figure out that I'm paired with her from a text from her, I would not have believed you. It's crazy. I'm so excited.

THE MODERATOR: What was one of the first times you met her? Was it through that Stanford experience?

RACHEL HECK: I think so. I think I met her probably -- it was at one of the majors I played a few years ago, but it was through Stanford. It was like, Hi, I'm going to Stanford, and she's been so supportive, so welcoming. She tells my teammates and me what classes to take and, yeah, she's really great. Super supportive.

THE MODERATOR: It's incredible to have a mentor like that, and now you get to tee it up with some of the idols you talked about from last week. What has changed for you the last couple weeks that you think will really help you as you continue on this golf journey at the MEDIHEAL Championship?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, my gosh, yeah. I think I have just gotten a little bit of everything in the past few weeks that's really going to help my game in the future. NAAs, I got that experience of playing with the pressure of having the lead, and last week I was playing in the biggest stage in

golf and right on the cut line.

So just put myself in all these different situations and I've just -- just learning from all of it, every unique situation. So I am going to take these experiences and it's really going to help me in the future.

THE MODERATOR: I know we talked about how this is the first time playing at Lake Merced. What is something that you think is really going to shine in your game this week?

RACHEL HECK: Hopefully I can -- I think ball striking is going to be key because the greens are pretty large, a little bit different than Olympic. They're really large and very undulated, so hopefully my ball striking can be pretty solid and I can get it on the right side of those greens to really have a look at birdie instead trying to ease it up and two-putt for par.

THE MODERATOR: What have you noticed about this course as you have been going through your practice rounds? What is probably going to be the most challenging? This isn't a course that people have gone super low. What do you think is going to kind of make you take advantage of this course?

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, I think it's a lot different than Olympic because at Olympic you were just kind of focused on the getting in in the fairway and on the green just anywhere.

Here the rough isn't as punishing. Definitely difficult, but not as punishing as Olympic. Yeah, just getting it on the right sides of the greens, because there are some really tricky slopes, and sometimes you have a 30-, 40-foot putt. You're going to be really happy walking off with a two putt. They're super difficult.

So, yeah, I think the person who goes the lowest will have probably the best ball striking.

THE MODERATOR: I know we don't have fans this week. Are your teammates back at school disappointed that they won't be able to come out and support you? Now that I'm not in college anymore I kind of don't understand when the college year ends. I don't know if you have those friends back at school still.

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, so we just ended last Friday. I finished my last paper during the U.S. Open. So everyone is home and it kind of works out in that respect. I know my coaches are still here and they wish they could come out and watch. I always love seeing all the little girls out here watching. That's probably my favorite part.

So that's differently a little bit disappointing, but, I mean, whatever.

THE MODERATOR: What is your schedule for the summer looking like?

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, so I have a couple -- few weeks off after this, which I'm really looking forward to just hanging out with my dog and kicking it back, so that will be great.

Then I have an exemption to the LPGA Marathon Classic after that for winning Nationals, which I'm stoked about another chance to play with the pros. It will be awesome.

Then a couple weeks after off that and then U.S. Women's Am and we'll see what happens from there. I'm just looking forward to my break, honestly.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, after the last couple of weeks and the roll you've been on, how important will the upcoming summer of taking it easy be for you?

RACHEL HECK: It's going to be so important. I really can't wait. I haven't been home a long time. I think knew dad counted earlier today and I've had 13 tournaments since February. It's just been nonstop.

So I think it's going to be really great just to rest, yeah, hang out with my family, see my friends back at home. Yeah, get energized to start playing again.

THE MODERATOR: What are some of the expectations you have for this week? You come in as a sponsor invite, an amateur. I would say for you it's kind of to do the best that you can of course, but what expectations do you hold yourself to at this championship?

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, so I try not to put expectations or pressure on myself. It's definitely cool to make the cut last week and be fun to do that again, but I think it would be crazy to go into this week with expectations that if I miss the cut then it's a disappointing week.

I'm still a sponsor exemption and I'm going to enjoy it, and, yeah, really soak it all in and enjoy playing with the pros and just learning as much as I can most importantly.

THE MODERATOR: I love that. With that, I think that will do it for us. Thank you, Rachel, for joining us.

RACHEL HECK: Thank you.

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