

U.S. Women's Amateur Championship

Thursday, August 10, 2023
Los Angeles, California, USA
Bel-Air Country Club

Rachel Heck

Quick Quotes

Q. Congratulations.

RACHEL HECK: Thank you. Appreciate it.

Q. So this is your second time in the quarterfinals I believe.

RACHEL HECK: Yes.

Q. What does it mean to get to this stage again?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, my gosh, it means the world to me just to put myself in this tournament. Going into the week I had absolutely no idea how it would go. Honestly I didn't think it would too great at all considering it's my first tournament back since October. I had been in field training.

So I think that mindset really helped me play really well this week. I'm just grateful to be here. I'm soaking it all in and not putting too much pressure on myself. I felt super relaxed out there today, so I think that mindset has helped a lot.

Q. Have you noticed any big differences in the course over the past couple days compared to today?

RACHEL HECK: No. I wouldn't say I've noticed anything different in the course. I think having experience with this tournament has helped though because I noticed a difference in the way I'm playing and the girls around me are playing.

You got to expect at this point that you're going to hit some errant shots. It's not going to be as tight as it was at the very beginning. So I think it was nice knowing that going into it so I wasn't rattled by anything today.

Q. How is your golf fitness? Are you tired?

RACHEL HECK: I feel pretty good. I mean, I'm definitely a



little bit tired. Not as tired as I thought I would be. I'm sure I'm going to have a massive adrenaline crash when I get home after this.

Right now, I feel pretty good. I'm excited to play the afternoon tomorrow and sleep in a little bit.

Q. At what point were you clear to reassume all physical activities? Do you have any limitations still?

RACHEL HECK: I don't have any limitations now. I was cleared I think sometime beginning of the June. Around June is when I could really work out like I wanted to, golf how I wanted to.

So, yeah, it hasn't been too long.

Q. They take it easy on you in the training, make any accommodations since you've had surgery?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, gosh, no. No, I was -- yeah, no, I just wanted to keep that quiet and not draw any attention to myself; just go through everything like anyone else.

No, no accommodations.

Q. If you had to put a percentage on that first round at NAAs that you played, how healthy were you or how healthy would you guess you were? I know you weren't back to 100 yet.

RACHEL HECK: No, I would say like 60, 50 or 60. I mean, I'm not going to throw a number on it, but I wasn't feeling good. I really wanted to give it a try, but my body wasn't feeling good and my game wasn't feeling good.

I'm happy I gave it a go, but it was not -- I was not ready yet.

Q. Obviously physically you improved, but how much mentally have you improved in that two and a half months to now?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, my gosh, so much. I was really struggling mentally at the time. I ended up -- like I called home one night and ended up going home the next day because I was just really, really struggling to get out of there. I just wanted to be with my family.



So it's hard. Injuries are hard. They're part of being an athlete, but knowing that doesn't make it easier.

Right now I'm super grateful and blessed to be feeling good again, to be playing golf again, to have graduated field training. The way I see it, life is good.

Q. With your dad on the bag this week, how is your guys' partnership working? Obviously it's working so far, but what do you appreciate about him being able to caddie for you?

RACHEL HECK: He just knows me so well obviously because he's my dad. That's why like I just feel so comfortable having him on bag. He knows me, he knows my game, he knows how to talk to me when I get frustrated.

We just have fun out there. Most of the time we're not talking about golf at all. We're sharing funny stories, catching up on life. Because there is not a whole lot of time I get to spend five hours with my dad, so it's nice to catch up.

Q. Where is your game now to maybe when you were playing your absolute best as a freshman or whatever your peak was? What are you still trying to improve on are there some areas that are better?

RACHEL HECK: Yeah, no, I mean, I would say when I was a freshman I just felt super confident in all areas. There was nothing that I felt was missing from my game.

Right now I'm so pleased with how my game is looking. Really didn't expect it to look like this. I feel great. I definitely want to keep cleaning up stuff, but this is a huge confidence booster to be able to play like this coming off not playing at all.

I'm really confident heading into my last year.

Q. You feel like this week you got sharper with all the reps?

RACHEL HECK: I would say this afternoon was like the least sharp I have been. But, yeah, I think after the first -- going into the first day I was actually really nervous.

I didn't think I would be nervous. I thought I would be like, oh, I have no expectations. Just not knowing how my game was going to look at all just really stressed me out. So I gained a lot of confidence from that first day knowing that it's still in me, I have it.

After that, I played a lot more calm and confident.

Q. What was the longest break or the duration from when your last shot to when you touched a club again? How many months was that?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, let's see, from the end of October to -- until May. There was one week in there I tried to play golf again, but other than that I didn't touch a club the whole time.

Q. Wow. Before October what would've been the longest break you took from golf once you got serious about it?

RACHEL HECK: Oh, gosh, probably like a week. Nothing like that.

Q. Yeah.

RACHEL HECK: Maybe a little bit more than that. Nothing like this. Like I've not experienced that.

Q. What are some of the lessons you learned from the last time you were in this stage that you can take into tomorrow?

RACHEL HECK: Just to be patient. That's some of the best advice I got going into this tournament when I was younger and hadn't played that many times.

Like if you are fortunate enough to make it towards the end of the week things are going to start getting a little rustier, and you have to manage shots, you're going to get tired. You might get mentally tired, too. You might find yourself getting frustrated.

So just take that for what it is and try to rein it in and be patient, and also just enjoy it. Like there is 156 players and 8 of us are left. I mean, that's special. This is a U.S. Women's Amateur, a special tournament. So I'm just going to go have fun.

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