

# Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship

Press Conference

Tuesday, 7 March 2023

**Rin Yoshida**

**Yahui Zhang**

**Rianne Mikhaela Malixi**

**Fiona Xu**

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Welcome to Singapore Island Country Club for the 2023 Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific championship. I am delighted to be joined by some of the young stars of the week. From Japan, we have Rin Yoshida, who at world No. 4 is the highest ranked player in the field this week. We have Yahui Zhang of China, Rianne Mikhaela Malixi from Philippines and Fiona Xu from New Zealand.

I'll ask you a question, and if you can each answer it, that would be great. Today you played your first practice round. What were your first impressions of the course?

FIONA XU: It's a very beautiful golf course. It's quite hilly so it's going to be quite tiring walking the course, but the greens are really nice, quite challenging.

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I agree with Fiona there. It'll be a hard walk this week, but I think a great factor to the scoring will be putting since the greens here are really huge and they're very undulating. It kind of reminds me of Chambers Bay, and I have a lot of memories there.

YAHUI ZHANG: This is a magnificent course and it has a lot of challenges. It's quite different from the ones I've played in China. Especially the greens and the fairways are quite different. It will be very challenging and I look forward to it.

RIN YOSHIDA: This course is very difficult. Greens not fast but sloping a lot.

**Q. I have got a couple of questions for the young ladies. Let me start with Rin since you are the top ranked player in the field. Can you just talk about is there any kind of pressure that you feel being the top ranked player, and also, tell us something about your**



**sister who played a couple of years on the tournament and the first couple of years she did very well. Have you had any talks with your sister? Has she challenged you to do better than her? Anything that you can tell us about her, as well?**

RIN YOSHIDA: It is the second time to play in a row, but I'm not really nervous, and I'm really excited to join this tournament. Yeah, I'm preparing for this tournament in Japan so hard, and so excited.

About my sister, I've been talking to her a lot. She was on the national team of Japan a few years ago and she was in this tournament, so I talked to her about the coast and the impression of this tournament.

**Q. Fiona, you had a 67 in the last round of WAAP when it was in Thailand. Every tournament you've had a top 10, including two of the professional tournaments. Can you just tell us has something changed? What has happened to your game, where you are at, and how your form is making you open for this tournament?**

FIONA XU: So my goal for any tournament is to always play consistent, so I try not to think too much when I play, and that has really helped me play well. My mental game has improved a lot.

**Q. How much motivation do you get from the fact that New Zealand again has got a World No. 1 in women's golf, Lydia Ko?**

FIONA XU: Yeah, so she's always been my idol, and I've always wanted to work as hard as she does. Yeah, my goal is to also play on the LPGA and hopefully play with her.

**Q. Have you had any interaction with her? Have you got any advice from her?**

FIONA XU: No, I've never really talked to her before.

**Q. For Zhang, Rianne and Fiona, you all played in the Queen Sirikit Cup a couple of weeks ago. Can you tell us what you've been doing since then and how your performance there has helped you prepare for this**



**week?**

FIONA XU: Just play how I played in the Philippines, try and be consistent, have fun, as well. That's also a big part of how I try to play well.

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I took a break, had to catch up with some of my schoolwork, then I went back to training after three days and went to see my coach and fitness trainer. I've been working a lot on my putting and my irons for this upcoming week.

YAHUI ZHANG: Philippines championship was the first time I entered and that's my first time playing in a big amateur championship and I have learned a lot from that. Since returning to China I have been practicing and focusing on how I can improve, and I'm looking forward to showing everyone.

**Q. You girls played in the Queen Sirikit Cup, three out of the four, so when you come back here and you look at familiar faces, how do you react and exchange notes?**

FIONA XU: It just feels like it was yesterday that we saw each other.

**Q. Is it nice when you come to big championships like this that you get to meet players from other countries and start to make good friendships with those girls that hopefully one day when you're playing professionally you'll already know each other and maybe take some comfort from that?**

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I always look forward to meeting new friends. Back in the Queen Sirikit Cup I think I played with Fiona (Xu) three out of four days, so we played a lot together that week, but it was fun.

**Q. The two of you had a very good tournament in Queen Sirikit. What are your hopes for this week?**

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: For me, I'll be sticking to the same mindset I have been sticking to the past few tournaments I've played. Just trying to stay in the present and not to get ahead of myself and just try to play my best every time I play.

**Q. Rin, you are the only one who didn't play the Queen Sirikit Cup. You didn't play. What have you been doing or what have you been playing in? Where have you been playing?**

RIN YOSHIDA: In Japan it's winter, so I am at camp with my coach. My coach has been here before, so me and my

coach are playing, putting mostly.

**Q. Fiona and Rianne, you played with Avani Prashanth from India who won the Queen Sirikit Cup. She came first. Any comments on her? I know she's a good player, but suddenly to win by 10 shots, any impressions or comments on that?**

FIONA XU: I've played with her in a practice round at the Australian Am in January, and she hits it really far. She's really consistent with her iron shots, her approaches, so I think that has helped a lot in the Queen Sirikit.

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I am not familiar with her, but knowing that we have a great competitor in the field just keeps the competitive juices flowing, so it's going to be a good tournament this week.

**Q. Yahui, I think your idol is Shanshan Feng. Has she been helpful?**

YAHUI ZHANG: Shanshan, of course, since Shanshan became the national coach, she has been giving me a lot of tips and actually helping my technical skills and helping me improve my drives by about 20 yards, so it's been a significant improvement. She has been not only an idol but a teacher and friend to me.

I forgot to mention, my first time in the Philippines I was a bit nervous, as well, so that's part of the experience I learned being in a big tournament.

**Q. Rianne, I saw your birthday is March 10, this week Friday. What kind of present do you want?**

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I mean, the best birthday gift would be playing in this event. Just being here alone is a huge honor for me, one of the best tournaments in Asia-Pacific is such a good experience for me.

**Q. Yahui, this is your first time competing in the Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific. Have you set yourself any goals for this week?**

YAHUI ZHANG: Yes, it is my first time. I'm not going to set huge and very high goals and expectation to put myself with the stress or pressure, but at the same time, I hope I can land in the top 10.

**Q. Rianne, Louis already mentioned that it's your birthday on Friday; back in 2021 you were the youngest player competing at the WAAP, and now that you're playing in your third championship, how have you developed as a golfer since then?**

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: I think I improved drastically the past three years. I certainly gained a lot of experiences just in playing tournaments.

I just got to handle the pressure better, so I think I did a better job doing that, and then knowing that I can bring that aspect of my game this week will definitely help.

**Q. At the last championship you qualified. How come you didn't join? Was it because of COVID? What's the reason? And knowing Tiffany Chan won the championship, have you had any interactions? What are your thoughts?**

YAHUI ZHANG: Last year indeed it was the COVID restriction I wasn't able to participate, but at the same time I was preparing for exams and the prep for college, so it was a good time for me. At the same time, I don't know Tiffany directly, but I truly congratulate our Chinese player winning the championships and look forward to meeting her.

**Q. You might not know, but this week is actually -- tomorrow is actually International Women's Day. I would like to ask since each of you are probably one of your top woman golfers in your own country, do you think it's motivation that you can probably inspire other juniors or your peers in your country, and probably if you go on to this journey that you'll be one of the top golfers in the future, as well?**

FIONA XU: Yes, I definitely hope that we would definitely bring up the next generation of women's golf. In our country (New Zealand), women's golf is quite strong, so we definitely support a lot of women's golf in our country.

Yes, I do hope that I can become top 10 in the LPGA. That's my goal. So yeah, that's what I'm working on.

RIANNE MIKHAELA MALIXI: My ultimate goal is to really take up the best stage, turn golf professionally, not only for myself but also the future generations of the players in the country (Philippines), not only for women but for everyone, as well.

You know, it's hard on me if I don't perform well, so I don't really play for myself, only just thinking that I have everybody behind me, behind the country, behind the flag. It weighs on me, so I always think about them whenever I'm playing.

YAHUI ZHANG: When I do become famous in the top ranking, I would love to inspire and help other women to play in China because the percentage of the population playing golf, especially women, is not that much.

RIN YOSHIDA: I want to be the person who is a confident player, and if it's not good -- if I don't have a good result or something, I will have a good attitude, so don't forget to apply it, and I just want to be that kind of player.

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