

The G4D Open

Mixed Zone

Wednesday, 10 May 2023

Erika Malmberg

THE G4D

OPEN

Q. How special was it for you to hit the first tee shot this morning?

ERIKA MALMBERG: It was amazing, an honour to hit the first tee shot ever in a G4D Open. Unspeakable.

Q. And you hit an absolute cracker as well. You must have been so relieved. What were you thinking as you were stepping up to that first tee shot with so many people around watching?

ERIKA MALMBERG: When I saw Monday that I would be the first one, I got nervous over the tee shot. This morning, my heart raced a lot and being there and getting my name called up, I just tried to step into my bubble. Didn't succeed. Then I just, okay, just get it done. Just get rid of this. Just do it, and, yeah, I made it and probably the golf shot of my life, 200 metres straight down the middle. It's not far; I usually hit that far but during that -- under those circumstances, it was such an amazing feeling.

Q. And how was the rest of your round? How did you feel the round went?

ERIKA MALMBERG: My round went well. I followed my process for 17 holes, so I'm proud. I lost my head at 18. But at least I survived 17 holes, so I'm glad.

Q. How important is this tournament for disabled golfers all around the world, those who are here, but also those who maybe play golf themselves in their own club or whatever and don't know about the existence of these tournaments?

ERIKA MALMBERG: This tournament sets a bar or more like a star to reach at because this is the biggest event, the biggest it could be. Of course, this tournament will be something that others will try to get into from now, and yeah, it's a good thing to have something to aim for with your golf.

Q. And if I can ask you, you're in one of the intellectual sport classes. Can I ask you to describe some of the ways in which your intellectual disability affects your golf?

ERIKA MALMBERG: My disability is autism mainly and it affects my golf by -- my brain doesn't function like the rest. I have different -- my logic isn't the same, and it could be every little moment on the course could be a huge deal for me. I think every golfer can relate to hitting a bad shot and then hit another bad shot but that amount of energy could drain me just by, oh, there was one referee; oh, there's one as well. That's equally bad for me because that stresses my brain out.

And also, practise golf is harder because it takes a lot more energy for me to just learn and listen and understand what my coach is telling me.

Q. How special do you think it is then that the intellectual classes you're playing with, the standing players, sitting players, visually impaired players, all playing together out there?

ERIKA MALMBERG: I think it's important that we all play together. There's a difference between different sport classes but I can't say it's a bigger difference between me and a standing or a sitting -- or those who are playing sitting class and the standing.

I think it's good that we have mixed it because we all have disabilities. It's just in different ways. But we all have reached this point in our game to be here and we can compete against each other. If there would be a sport class that every guy in that sport class would be on top of the leaderboard, then we could discuss it a version of it. But since they are not, obviously we have the same challenges.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports