

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Springfield, New Jersey, USA
Baltusrol Golf Club



Amy Ruengmateekhun Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome inside and in person here at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. I am pleased to be joined by one of our LPGA professionals here competing in this major championship, Amy Ruengmateekhun. I just want to kick it off before we get to the people behind me here, but this is your KPMG Women's PGA Championship debut. You finished T4 at the LPGA Professionals National Championship to gain entry into this event. Overall, what are you most looking forward to this week and this experience overall?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: I had like 11 months to actually look forward to this event, and those 11 months have felt like -- with my family, this means a lot to me because it's my second major but also I get to spend it with my family, so we made sure in those 11 months, hey, let's make sure that we can make this a family trip thing. So my dad closed the restaurant for three weeks, and my parents, they're both here. My husband is going to come down on Wednesday, and my in-laws are going to come, too.

It means a lot to me that they're going to be here supporting me at this big event with pretty much the biggest stage in women's golf. I'm pretty excited.

Q. You talked a little bit about this is the most golf you've played in one week in a very long time. What's it been like to prepare for not only just any other professional event but a major championship?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: Honestly, it's been a roller coaster because at first I wasn't practicing as much. I'm just trying to hit in between lessons, go coach my girls, and maybe play a couple holes with them, too, just to prepare for this a couple months before. As we got closer this month, this last month, I tried to play a little bit more, practice a little bit more, worked with my old instructor. I was getting sore in certain places that I haven't gotten sore in a while.

It's a lot of golf for me. But I also want to make sure that I'm doing it to have fun and just enjoy this moment.

Leading up to this tournament, like I said, this week is going to be the most golf I've played in the past year basically. I just want to enjoy the moment.

Q. What's the mix of emotions as you return to competition as far as the balance of excitement and nerves?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: Oh, man, it's definitely a lot of both. There's moments where I was playing in the practice round that I was nervous. Like yesterday I was playing with Christina Kim, and it really hit me that I'm playing with really good golfers.

Then also there's times where I'm just like focused, in the moment. I felt like I was back when I was playing Symetra back then, like hey, I know what I'm doing, let's just do it.

I have a little bit of both emotions. I'm nervous. I'll be nervous sometimes and I'll be confident about my game.

It's a little bit of both, so hopefully when I start playing, I'll just be -- it's okay and I'll embrace the nerves and just go back to, hey, focus, there's a reason why I'm here, and just do the best I can.

Q. You've won so many state titles with Ursuline Academy which you coach at, played in the U.S. Women's Open. Where does this week rank in terms of your career on the golf course?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: You know, honestly, with the state titles, those mean so much not only to me but to the girls, and to be able to see them overcome like this year when we won state, they were losing by five, they were in second by five, and they were all nervous because they hadn't been behind in a while. We've been pretty dominant the whole year, and the team that's leading is a pretty young team that's really, really good this year.

I just told them, hey, five strokes is pretty much one hole. Five strokes is nothing. Just being part of -- at Oklahoma



State we would be losing by 10 or 15 and we would come back and win by five, and just saying, I'm pretty confident that you'll be doing great.

That kind of helped them a little bit, just like motivate them and get them ready, hey, just do your game, stick to the plan and you'll do great.

They came back and won by 12 that second day and won by seven, and that really kind of inspired me, like hey, if they can do that, I feel like I can do that, too, when I come out here. It's very motivating to see not only that I'm trying to motivate them, but they motivate me, as well.

Q. Are any of them kind of coaching Coach this week as you get back in the competitive saddle?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: Yeah, they're excited for me. They're saying, good luck, Coach. They'll also text me and just be like, hey, you got this; you always preach to us to have fun, give it 100 percent no matter what happens, so you should just do the same, what you tell us.

Q. You're no stranger to professional golf, but is this kind of a pinch-me moment, kind of walking inside the ropes at Baltusrol, one of the biggest stages in golf, and seeing some of these players week in, week out on TV that you may have followed and try to emulate now that you coach?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: No, it definitely -- like I said, yesterday playing with my old friend Jan and also Christina Kim, that's that moment where I'm like, okay, I'm actually here, it's happening; we're going into it, there's no going back. I don't want to go back. I want to keep going.

That moment was when I'm like, hey, let's have fun. Let's enjoy this moment with my family, too, and just having my dad there next to me, because he hasn't -- when I played on the Symetra Tour, he wasn't really there. He had to work at the restaurant. For him to take time off and follow me as I'm playing, like that hit me, too, like hey, I'm actually here and he's here with me.

Q. How important is it to the PGA of America to have all of you here and celebrate what all of you do, doing your, quote-unquote, real jobs and not competing?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: You know, to be able to represent PGA of America and also LPGA, it's huge for us, because it shows that PGA is supporting us, especially like we're working and all that all the time, so being able to have us here and support us and represent them, like it's huge because at the end of the day we're here to grow the game and also just show that yes, we do work, we do play

a little on the side, but we're here to represent them and just enjoy the moment out here.

Q. Along the same lines, how important is it to get girls and women involved in the game to a greater extent, whether they want to play at this level or play recreationally or something in between?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: It is important, because I feel like nowadays, it's grown a lot more. Now we have a lot more women golfers joining, girls joining, but just showing them that there's different routes into the game. It doesn't mean you have to play college golf or professional golf or collegiate level. You can get into the game just how we're getting into the game. We're here teaching, growing the game, coaching girls, and just showing them that hey, you can be here, too, or just being out on the course and just seeing awesome golfers out here. There's ways to get into the game, and that's kind of how I talk to my girls about, like hey, if you want to play college golf, awesome, I help and support you. If you want to go into the business world and play for some company events and all that, we're preparing for that, as well.

Q. Competing can be a real grind. After you've chased it for a while and you decided not to play, did coaching kind of rekindle a love for the game?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: I think it did. It really did, because when I stopped playing on the Symetra Tour, it was really hard for me because I was preparing to play professional golf my whole life. Like that's all there was. There wasn't a plan B. There wasn't a plan C. There was just play professional golf, get on the LPGA, be a successful LPGA player. I think once I was playing third year, fourth year into Symetra, it hit me, I'm mentally burned out, something is wrong, I'm not enjoying the game as much. Something is going on. So I needed to take time and just kind of reevaluate what I should do.

So I went back home. I started teaching and coaching, just to give it a try, be like, maybe I can help people if I can't help myself.

When I was teaching and coaching, it really just changed my mind. Like it just -- I had so much more fun watching. I love helping people. Even when I was on the Symetra Tour, I was like, how can I help, I'm always one of those that wants to help people.

I feel like helping people not only makes me feel great but also just seeing how much we can make a difference in their lives. It just makes a huge impact in mine.

When I qualified for the U.S. Open, I didn't touch a club for



nine months, besides teaching, showing some shots. But other than that, I haven't been playing or anything.

We had the state championship, and we won as a team, and I thought that was such a cool moment, and two days later I had my U.S. Open card. I was like, I haven't played, let's just play for fun. I went to the U.S. Open qualifier, literally like 20 minutes before, I had an interview right before, so my brother told me, hey, you've got to play in 15 minutes, and I was like, okay, cool, and I go to the course. He's like, do you want to putt a little bit? Sure. I had one or two putts, missed my putts, picked up the ball, said, let's just go, and then I qualified. I got the second spot.

It was a crazy moment, but I was like, wow, maybe this is it. Like I just needed a clear mind. I just wanted to have fun. My goal back then was just to hit the fairway. Once I hit the fairway, hit the green. Once I hit the green, let's try to make the putt or two-putt it. It was just a lot simpler now. I feel like golf is a lot more simpler.

Q. Can you take us inside a little bit of Sunday with your dad? Was there a moment or two walking that it hit you how cool that was?

AMY RUENGMATEEKHUN: Well, it hit me also because he was like, Amy, do this, Amy, do that. I was like, okay, we're back at junior golf again.

Besides that, just being able to walk with him, and I'm watching him, just seeing how he's enjoying this moment. He's loving every bit of it because his dream was obviously to have me on the LPGA, and that's something that unfortunately didn't happen, but being able to do this hopefully maybe every year or -- this will give him that opportunity to live that moment again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Amy.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports