

KPMG Women's PGA Championship

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Springfield, New Jersey, USA
Baltusrol Golf Club

Rose Zhang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're here with Rose Zhang. Tell us about your round here at Baltusrol, especially that birdie on 18.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, where to start? I think I'm very satisfied with how the score turned out. Took a couple bumps in between to get there. I feel like my putting was a little bit off the entire way, but I also put myself in positions where I was giving myself 60-footers probably four or five holes in a row.

I feel like this is just a tough golf course, and I really had to grind it out there.

Q. After the start that you had with 2-over through 4, you had a couple of tough par putts on 5 and 6. How big was that for your round to knock those down?

ROSE ZHANG: It was huge. It was essentially me trying to stop the bleeding and trying to figure out how to make pars out here. Once I made a couple long putts for par, that really studied my momentum, and it allowed me to get into the head space of, okay, steady my round a little bit, let's go from here and hit shot by shot. Those two par putts were definitely essential for the rest of the round, and it gave me the confidence to just keep going.

Q. Are you as calm as you appear to be even though you were a couple over par early?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I felt pretty calm for the most part. I definitely felt like I was searching my golf game just a little bit because there were a couple adjustments that I felt that were uncomfortable for me when I was out there. I feel like this is just who I am. I'm trying to keep it as calm as possible.

When you're not playing well, you're going to try to turn it around. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. You come back, and you try to play again.



Q. As a player, this is such a good test. What's the pride you feel in any round under par at this golf course?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I mean, first and foremost, you really do have to grind when you're out here. You're not going to hit perfect shots, and even if you do hit perfect shots, you need to be in the position to where you place the ball properly on these greens.

It just showed that I had great course management. I made a lot of clutch par putts, showed that I had the grind in me, and anyone who shoots red figures here should be pretty proud of what they were doing out there.

Q. It's your first round as a pro in a major. Is there anything that surprised you out there about yourself or your game or anything that was thrown your way that you didn't expect?

ROSE ZHANG: Well, every single day I feel like as a professional now, I'm learning so much. I'm just really trying to learn how it is inside the ropes, how players operate.

I was playing with Lexi and Minjee, and these are people that I've watched on TV since I was younger. Just understanding how they do things and how they operate, I'm just learning along as I go.

Nothing that I didn't expect. I knew when you're going to be out here, it's going to be very difficult, and you're going to have to try to claw your way back when things aren't going your way.

These are all things that the game of golf has brought me and taught me in the past couple years.

Q. You spoke earlier this week about how tiring it is to have all the media obligations and things. Are you sick of us yet? How are you managing the pressures of a major with all of the other things that are going on outside the ropes?



ROSE ZHANG: I'm not sick of you guys, if you guys aren't sick of me at that point. Yeah, it's just been on trending -- there's so many obligations as a professional, but I'm really taking it in my stride. I feel very thankful to be in this position. As long as I keep playing and do what I need to do, I definitely know that I have a lot of adjusting and have a lot of things to work on in my game.

It's a constant upward trend of trying to improve my own game.

Q. On 2 and 4, what led to the bogeys, and are you -- it sounded like you weren't hitting the panic button.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, so 1 was a great up-and-down. Sprayed my hybrid to the right, but then on the next hole I didn't hit exactly a solid tee shot and managed to go in the rough.

Came out pretty well. I only had 20 feet left. But I was off the collar next to the green on the left. Just trying to putt through with some rough that's blocking my way made, I guess, the pace of my putting a little bit off. Managed to three-putt that. Missed like a six-footer.

Then went to the next hole, parred.

Then going to the par-3, thought I hit a really good iron shot. I hit a 7-iron, but it didn't go up that hill that was kind of guarding the middle part of the green and had around a 60-footer left and did not lag it well, either. Proceeded to miss like a seven-footer, and that was just how it went.

Even though I did manage to par the rest of my holes and the next couple holes, I still placed myself in some really awkward positions with long par putts. Definitely things to work on.

Q. After your opening round at Mizuho, we had a chance to speak and you said that you would call the round moderately casual. How would you characterize this round as your first professional round in a major?

ROSE ZHANG: I don't think any round at a major championship is casual. I definitely had to grind out there. I will say it was pretty much like a roller coaster.

I feel like I was pretty steady in terms of my mental and pretty calm down the stretch, but the game did not look easy, and it did not feel easy.

Q. Of course at Mizuho you did something that hasn't been done since 1951. Now moving forward towards the rest of the season and heading into major championship season, does that win kind of take off

some pressure and say, I got the win under my belt, let's see what happens, or is it, all right, now I need to follow that up and continue to play well?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I definitely feel like there's a balance in between both. I always have high expectations for myself in terms of my preparation and how I'm supposed to perform, regardless of what my position is or what place I finish.

I think that -- I don't have any expectations when it comes to the rest of the season or what I'm going to do. It's more so just learn. I treat this entire year as a fresh rookie year where I'm trying to learn as much as possible and navigate myself in this real professional world.

Q. We just had a player come in here who said she's a rookie, as well, and she's used a local caddie every week on Tour. Can you give us a little snippet of how you and Jason have -- what you're learning from him and what he's learning from you, maybe where you've had a moment, an aha moment out there with him?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I feel very fortunate, super lucky to have Gilly on my bag. I understand that finding a caddie is extremely difficult, and really just trying to mesh well together out on the golf course, making sure that you guys are reading the right putts and feeling the same yard /APLZ. That's a very hard task, especially when you come into a professional event and you're and up and coming rookie. I feel very fortunate that Kevin, my agent, gave me Jason's contact, and from there, even Mizuho, we had such a good time, and our personalities are very -- I would say they work really well together.

When I'm out here at a major championship, when there's a lot of tension and there's a lot of difficulties on the golf course ahead of us, I feel very comfortable with him. We evaluate shots.

I know my own game, but he also knows his stuff, and I've just been learning a lot about how to use yardages properly, really being precise with landing spots, and he does great at all those things. Very thankful that he's been with me and we've been working so well together.

Q. If you could just take us through 18. I know you had a great look there. What did you hit your second shot?

ROSE ZHANG: I hit a really great drive to start with. The wind was a little into, but it was probably one of my best drives in the middle of the fairway. Going on to the second shot, I had 219 to the pin, 197 to the front. I knew it was going to roll up. Wind was a little bit into, so had a little



downhill high, too, so I was just going to hit a really easy 3-wood to see where it ends up. I kind of wanted to take left out of play just because it's such a difficult shot to get up-and-down, especially with the slopes going left to right on the greens.

But once I hit it, it was very solid, just probably two, three yards left from the pin, and started rolling and kept rolling, and I heard the crowds just keep on cheering.

It was exciting to know that the ball ended up well, and once I got to the top, very, very pleased with where it ended up.

I had a really good look at it. Felt like it was just a touch short on pace, but it was a really good putt overall. I'm not disarranged with that attempt. It was a very solid birdie.

Q. Were you close to the Jack Nicklaus plaque?

ROSE ZHANG: I was not. I believe I was pretty far away from it.

Q. How far was that eagle putt do you think?

ROSE ZHANG: That eagle putt was probably like eight feet, seven feet.

Q. Steve mentioned the Jack Nicklaus plaque, a great 1-iron he hit in 1967. Have you ever hit a 1-iron?

ROSE ZHANG: I actually have. So I played the Curtis Cup at Merion, which is not too far from here, and it was a team activity where all of us went to the plaque -- I forgot the name. We went to that plaque, and we all just hit a bunch of 1-irons into 18. Very difficult to get it off the ground. I don't really have that fast of a swing speed. But it was really fun regardless. We tried to do a closest to the pin from there.

Q. A lot of folks when they talk about you talk about your poise. Do you feel that's something you're born with or is that something you've developed through your career?

ROSE ZHANG: I would say both. From a young age I was pretty poised and pretty steady. But I do feel like I've also been trained to just be as steady as can be. My parents, my dad, my mom have taught me to just be flexible in any situation that I'm in, and I feel like with a lot of adversity coming at me from a young age and doing a lot of different obligations that has allowed me to really try to be as composed as possible.

It just comes with practice and innate self, I guess.

Q. In the 1-iron competition, were you the closest?

ROSE ZHANG: I was not, sadly. I did not reach the green.

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