

Dana Open presented by Marathon

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Sylvania, Ohio, USA

Highland Meadows Golf Club

Erica Shepherd

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, I'm here with Erica Shepherd at the Dana Open. Second year as a sponsor invite. What does this tournament sort of mean to you and how happy are you to be here again?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, I'm just super happy to be here. I am able to be a sponsor invite because I know Judd Silverman. His son played golf at Duke, so I was able to have that relationship, and then it just happens that he's an LPGA tournament director, so I got lucky with that.

It's just awesome to see how much he cares about this tournament, about Toledo, and women's golf. So just to be a part of it for a few years, it's meant a lot and been great for my game as well.

Q. What about this course do you think suits your game or maybe doesn't suit your game and just coming back here and playing at Highland Meadows?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, I don't know. It's definitely a tricky golf course. A lot of doglegs. But I think it just being a northern golf course is what fits my game. Grew up in Indiana not too far from here. Kind of feel like a little bit of my home course: tree-lined, bent grass. So that's my favorite type of golf.

So just always good to come here and kind of feel like you're a little bit at home.

Q. You mentioned this experience sort of helping your golf game, and now you're playing on the Epson Tour this year. How has your golf game been shaping up this year and how will this experience help again?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Uh-huh, so this is my first time playing this tournament as a tour member, an Epson Tour member, so I started off this year a little rough I would say. I missed the first seven cuts and I have been playing pro events here and there since I was about 17. A couple U.S. Opens and then this tournament, and one they had in

Indiana at the Brickyard.

So it was kind of very humbling to miss the first seven cuts. That was a little bit shocking to, me but I learned a lot about my golf game and about myself over that time, so I've been able to make some adjustments.

Thankfully it's a long season so I still have a chance to get my card if I finish the year well, so that's the goal. It's definitely been a really big learning process.

Other than not playing good golf at the beginning, I have enjoyed it and I love that this is my job.

Q. I mean, it's often hard when good college players come over. What are the big differences and learning points you've been trying to take in as you play on the Epson Tour full time?

ERICA SHEPHERD: I think the biggest difference is you're playing four weeks in a row. In college, felt like we had one or two events a month. After each event you could have a couple weeks, work on what you needed to, and then get back to it.

Here, it's like you don't have much time. If you're not hitting it well, like you just got to hope that you have one random warmup where you find something.

So I think just the fact that there is so many in a row, you play four events, and if you miss four cuts, you just feel like it flew by. So, yeah, I think it's the biggest difference.

Then obviously being on your own. I had a really good team at Duke, so having girls around me all the time who were my best friends, that was a really fun time. I definitely miss them a lot.

I met some great people out here, so kind of trying to build that on my own out here.

Q. Being so close to home relatively, do you have people from home coming to watch?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, I think every year I've had



some of my family. Obviously my parents, and my brother lives in Cleveland, so he'll come over. There has been always support, and the with the Silvermans, having their family here supporting me every year has been awesome.

Q. What has been off the course maybe the first, biggest lesson that you've kind of learned being on tour?

ERICA SHEPHERD: The biggest lesson? There has been a lot I would say, but I think just from playing bad golf you realize that if golf is your entire life, that's just not going to work.

I mean, even if you're playing well, you still have to like have good relationships and like enjoy your life and be happy. Because I mean, I'm not going to play golf until the day I die. When I'm done with this, I want to have a life and have people that make me happy and just be able to enjoy my life without it being based on good golf.

So finding things outside of golf and just having balance, I think when you're a pro that becomes even more evident that that's very important.

Q. Was that maybe something you picked up in college?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah. I definitely did learn that in college. I am the type of person that I get hyper fixated on things, so it's easy for me to practice for 13 hours a day and not even think twice about it.

In college it's kind of built in for you. Like you live with people. There is obviously like very -- a lot of social things in college that are very easy for you to do.

Definitely easier in college. When you're playing pro golf and living out a suitcase, it's definitely -- you have to make more of an effort to find that I would say.

Q. Adjusting your game to being on tour, you're going to get tired. You're going to get confused of where you're waking up in the morning probably.

ERICA SHEPHERD: Uh-huh.

Q. Things like that. How do you get everything in a row?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, I played 36 holes of pro-am yesterday, and so I should be tired. My body probably should hurt, but I honestly feel great.

I'm just super passionate about golf and what I'm doing.

My goal is to be No. 1 in the world, so I wake up every day and have energy.

I haven't really gotten those body aches yet or felt super tired. I'm just like super excited to have this opportunity. I've always had a lot of energy as a person. I'm just kind of thriving off that I would say.

Q. Yeah. You said you missed your first seven cuts.

ERICA SHEPHERD: I did.

Q. How have you righted the ship? Have you fully done that?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, since I missed the first seven, we had about a month break after the first seven events, so I kind of reassessed and knew I needed to use that time to figure it out.

First seven events I hit the ball really poorly. My whole life since I picked up a golf club I've been a good ball-striker. I feel like I just used my athleticism to figure out how to swing.

I was just I guess lost. I was swinging bad, hitting the ball bad. It was hard to play good golf with that.

But I kind of went back to some basic swing stuff. I moved to Florida when I turned pro and came back to Indiana for the summer to go back to my home course, spend more time with my parents, spend some time with my childhood swing coach.

That I think is what turned it around for me. Had a couple good finishes after that in Michigan and Indiana, and also we've been in the Midwest for a good amount of events since then. Kind of being back home and just being grounded again I was able to flip it around, and hopefully can carry that momentum into the rest of the season.

Q. How have you been playing maybe the last couple weeks? Are you coming in with your game sharp?

ERICA SHEPHERD: Yeah, I actually missed the cut last week. There was an Epson event in Connecticut that finished this past Sunday. I missed the cut. If I finished well I would've made it.

I wasn't really making putts. Hitting really good putts but they weren't going in. That's the part of golf that stinks. When you miss the cut and feel like it's weird you can live with that, but when you miss it because you aren't good enough to make it, that's when it stinks. I feel good about where my game is now.

Q. Good luck.

ERICA SHEPHERD: Thank you so much.

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