

# ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Ayrshire, Scotland, UK

Dundonald Links

## Rose Zhang

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Dundonald Links this week. This is your first time playing here. Can you just talk us through your first impressions of the golf course and the golf club?

ROSE ZHANG: Definitely. The clubhouse is incredible. It's super nice, super cozy. I played, or I got here on Monday afternoon evening and played a little bit yesterday. I really got a taste of links weather. I got through four holes before my entire self got soaked. So I really got a true taste of what it would be like tomorrow and the couple days after.

I think today's weather was perfect. The course is playing pretty difficult. I mean, it's links golf and you definitely have to be creative. You have to learn to commit to the wind and your yardages, but that's the test of links golf. I'm pretty excited to really just get the week going.

THE MODERATOR: And so this is your first tournament here, but also your first professional tournament in Scotland. How have you prepared coming into this week?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, well, I think I tried preparing for the Olympics last week as best as I could, and then this week is almost a little bit of a different type of golf. Really learning how to hit flighted shots and putting around the greens is very important, hitting some low runners is also just essential.

So that's what I have been doing, and a lot of pace work on the putting greens. It is slower but I expect the ball to be just barely moving and jiggling when the wind picks up.

THE MODERATOR: And you touched on it, last week at the Olympics, you had a great run. How was the experience there, and just talk us through your first Olympic experience.

ROSE ZHANG: It was so fun. I feel like that's probably the second time I've ever played in front of those big crowds of



that calibre, and everyone was so supportive. They loved the woman's golf games and they cheer the players on every step of the way. So I really felt that energy and was just a really exciting week, especially being in contention.

THE MODERATOR: And so one more before I open it up.

Next week is obviously the last major of the year. How are you feeling going into it? Obviously it's been a long stretch. How do you keep your momentum going?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I think you take it week-by-week. Obviously next week is GOING to be a big one considering it is the last major. But I'm really excited to just be able to be at such a prestigious, historic venue like St Andrews, and we'll see what happens when I get there.

So I think I really like to take it week-by-week; so I don't really have anything in mind for next week to be fair.

#### **Q. Saying how supportive they were, do you usually get crowds at tournaments in America?**

ROSE ZHANG: You do get crowds for sure but I think especially seeing that many people on that sort of venue, the only other time I've really seen that or felt that was at the Augusta National Women's Amateur when it was my last year, or basically every year that I've played it.

But especially just seeing that many people really just supporting golf, it's really cool.

#### **Q. Are there kids? Families are watching, weren't they, which is unusual, I think?**

ROSE ZHANG: I don't want to say it's unusual. I think, especially in the States, too, there's a lot more junior golfers and young kids who are starting to get into the sport.

So I'd almost argue that golf has become a lot more of a family sport and that's pretty unique, especially with just how inclusive the game can be, no matter what age you are.

#### **Q. Do you think that same kind of family crowd would appear at a men's event?**



ROSE ZHANG: You definitely get mixed crowds. I think the woman's golf game in general has become a lot more popular both amongst males, male viewers and female viewers.

So I don't really know the statistics there, but I'm sure that there's a lot. I've seen a lot of mixed crowds just from young -- young juniors to older people or elderly people who also enjoy the game.

THE MODERATOR: Just a couple from me. What is your experience with links golf and how would you maybe kind of prepare for this week?

ROSE ZHANG: Especially with links golf, you really have to just keep the ball under the wind a little bit more than any other golf course. There's, I mean, just from bunkers, you have to be prepared for any sort of bounces, any sort of lies, and utilizing certain slopes to your advantage is basically the essence of what links golf is.

My coach at Stanford is Scottish, and she always has us playing different types of low flighters, links shots, and that's kind of what I have taken in as experience for preparing for this type of golf course and event.

THE MODERATOR: Is this your first time playing a links-style golf course?

ROSE ZHANG: No, it isn't. I played the Junior British Open at St Andrews, the New Course, and played Muirfield. Played Carnoustie.

So there's been a lot of tracks where I've gotten to experience links golf, and yeah, it's very, very difficult. But it's also really challenging in a fun way.

THE MODERATOR: Lilia mentioned to us that you guys got to meet Katie Ledecy; obviously the Stanford connection there. How close are you guys? Is that your first time meeting? What was that story?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it's my first time meeting her. Obviously she's a renowned name. She's an inspiration to so many athletes, especially for me. Like it's super cool to have something in common with her, and you know, she's going to be back in the bay, and she's given me her number. So hopefully we can maybe just meet up, and I can learn so much more from her, but obviously in her own time, that is.

So it's just super cool. She's really personable and she's really kind to real give us an opportunity to kind of just talk to her a little bit and say "hi."

THE MODERATOR: Sticking on the Olympics, did you get to be a fan at all? Did you get to see any of the other sports, other than Katie obviously, any other athletes that you guys met.

ROSE ZHANG: So we went to watch swimming that Saturday night that we flew in but I'm a huge track fan. I love Sydney McLaughlin so much, and she is definitely an inspiration for me just in general from what she does on the track, off the track.

I think -- I haven't been able to meet her but maybe sometime down the road eventually if there is a possibility.

But I went to closing with Lilia and we got to see so many other athletes that we saw on television. But yeah, it was cool.

THE MODERATOR: And just lastly from me, those two weeks in Scotland, is there anything that you're going to do or want to do while you're here or anything you're looking forward to?

ROSE ZHANG: Looking forward to? I don't know. I've been getting some really good Indian food recently. So it's been pretty solid out here. I think I don't really have anything that I want on my bucket list, but if anyone has any suggestions, I'll take them.

THE MODERATOR: Have you tried haggis yet?

ROSE ZHANG: I've tried haggis before.

THE MODERATOR: You ticked it off.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I ticked it off. Maybe I'll try some other things, who knows.

THE MODERATOR: Who is your coach at Stanford?

ROSE ZHANG: Coach Anne Walker.

THE MODERATOR: I just have one last one.

Obviously Lydia, with everything she's done, as a player who is just beginning her career, how much of an inspiration has she been, not only to you, but some of the other golfers out here?

ROSE ZHANG: The way that she carries herself is just so incredible. A lot of people -- obviously her career shows for itself, but what she's like off the golf course is simply amazing.

And I was very fortunate to just be in the final group with her and really witness that sort of history.

I think she is -- out of anyone, she deserves it more just based on how hard she works and how great she is, as a person and as a mentor. She's always been there to really make me feel, I guess really comfortable, especially when I'm out here not knowing what to do.

So she's been there -- been there, done that when she was younger, so the fact that she's still very young but for her to do what she does, it's definitely an inspiration.

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