

ANA Inspiration

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Michelle Wie West

Quick Quotes

Q. With a player who has been a fixture here throughout the years at Mission Hills, Michelle Wie, right here again in the mix with a 70 here today. Really grinding it out with some great putts. How would you describe the day?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, we came into the day like, okay, no stress today, easy golf, and the first couple holes were not easy golf.

So I am just happy to see my name on the first page of the leaderboard. That's really special to me. Been a long time since I've seen that.

So it was fun today making putts out here. I have a lot of great memories, my first one being 18 years ago. I was kind of looking back yesterday. This place a really special to me and I'm just glad to be here. What a great day.

Q. First time back here now as a mom to Makenna and married as well. What is it like coming back here now at this new stage in your life?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: It feels weird. You know, looking back, I was a kid. I still feel like a kid. Having a baby definitely puts a different perspective on everything. I'm more excited to go home and see her than I was about my round, to be honest.

Q. You just returned to the sport last week in the Kia Classic. What did you take away from that experience and your return that's helping you so far this week?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: It was tough. I mean, the first day conditions felt like full British Open. I was like not prepared for that.

But honestly, the second day I learned a lot. Even the first day I learned a lot. Sometimes you just got to get thrown into the mix.

Definitely was glad I played last week, but more excited about my round today. And I learned a lot. Learned a lot



today and hopefully use that tomorrow.

Q. Michelle, nice 2-under 70 to start your time here at ANA Inspiration, getting back into the swing of competition. I imagine that is kind of just what you needed to get a little more confidence.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, especially after last week. It was really good to see those putts roll in. You know, put myself in some interesting spots today, but really proud of how I grinded it out there.

Q. You had some really good finishes on some holes, and some holes maybe you wanted that putt to drop a little bit more. Take us through some the differences in that today.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, the last two holes I left myself in prime place to make a birdie, hit great putts, thought we read it right; just a case of a misread.

Overall I have to say it's a grind out here. The course is playing really firm. It's not super easy to hit it tight. I'm just really proud of myself for how I grinded it out.

Q. As you were getting ready to come back or starting to think about coming back was this the tournament that you kind of had focused on?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, 100% something that I really want to play. This place is, as you all know, really a special place to me, and to be back here, especially with a baby here as well, it's a really special place. That was definitely a goal that I had.

Q. When you walk on the grounds here, do you immediately become 13 years old again? Are there other things you keep thinking about in between?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, I almost made hole-in-one on the 13th hole and I was like -- I'm pretty sure I yelled out, Lifetime Oreos. (Laughter.) Bolted back to being 13, getting excited about Oreos.

Q. Going all the way back to 2003, you just seem to have good vibes here. What is it about this place that brings that out in you?



MICHELLE WIE WEST: I always think the tradition here, just knowing the legends that have jumped into Poppy's Pond. Honestly, it's the volunteers that make it special to me. I recognize a lot of faces over the years. Just being able to see them year after year and just the vibe here is great.

The people are great here. They're always so welcoming to all of us, so excited to have us here. I think I can feel that and I definitely play off that.

Q. How is your game now different than it was as a 13 year old and ten years ago even?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I have to say today was a bit like when I was 13: I kind of hit it all over the place and grinded a bit out there.

But that feels good. I think that's kind of how I play. I don't know if I hit it further when I was 13. I keep looking back on some of the drives I used to hit back then and be like, I can't believe I used to hit it this far.

But I like to think I got a little bit better in 18 years.
(Laughter.)

Q. You're used to playing this event in front of pretty large galleries. What was it like out there today with just your father and a few stragglers from the media following you?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, it's definitely weird. It doesn't have the same vibe. The first tee was the most shocking one where you don't walk through a tunnel, don't have the grandstands really close by.

Hopefully soon enough we'll get back to having fans at sporting events really soon. Seems like we're on our way. Overall this tournament has made us feel super safe so far with all the protocols. As unfortunate as it is, it's something that we to do right now.

But hopefully it will be temporary and we can get back to it really soon.

Q. Quick follow. Tiger and Rory have been among the men's players who have said not having that electricity from the crowd, they didn't realize how much they fed off that until it was gone. Do you understand better what they were saying from this week and last week?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, yeah, for sure. I mean, you hit great shots out here and you're like, Was that not good? Was that over the green? Dead silent. Obviously it's awkward for the couple people out there to make really big

claps. So it's different.

The walk down 18 is definitely different. You don't have that jolt of adrenaline when you're walking past the crowds. At the same time, just nice to see some people out there today. I have to say, easing back into it, not having crowds, I think makes it a little bit easier for me.

Q. And where is Makenna physically at this moment?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: She's with my mom right now. Yeah.

Q. Is your putting more feel based or technique based? I know you use AimPoint at times, but I also saw you using the green book out there.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I would say it's a bit of both. Obviously I would say I'm working more towards being more feel based. I think AimPoint allows me to do that.

I just really check the greens book to make sure that what I'm seeing and feeling is correct, that I'm not way off base. I used to be a lot more technical with the greens book, but I think practicing and playing without any greens book the last three years, it's really allowed me to be a lot more feel based.

Q. How were you introduced to AimPoint?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I think my coach knew the guy who started AimPoint and he was in Orlando and we just met up when I was there. I started doing it long time ago.

Q. Obviously without the grandstands, without the wall on 18, that hole looks and plays a lot different. Obviously been out here since 2003. How was that hole today compared to years past with it being so firm?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I mean, with the grandstand behind it I never would've thought twice. I would've gone for it. I had the perfect distance today but didn't like my lie, and before I would've just blown it back past the back into the grandstand.

But it makes you think. It makes you think, because that water comes up pretty quickly behind the greens. I like it. I think it makes for a really good hole.

Didn't go for it today, but we'll see.

Q. Obviously in the morning today, playing in the afternoon tomorrow. We can already feel the wind picking up. How different does this course play in the

morning to the p.m.?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, yeah, so much. It's pretty cold in the morning so you're about half a club to almost a full club shorter. During the middle of the round all of a sudden you pick up yardage, so it's definitely an adjustment. Shout out to my caddie for helping me adjust to that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports