

ANA Inspiration

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Sophia Popov

Quick Quotes

Q. First ANA Inspiration, first round under your belt. How are you feeling after round one?

SOPHIA POPOV: Pretty good actually. I came off to not even a rough start, just not making any putts, and then I made a double bogey also from putting.

So it was a little bit of a slow start, but I knew I was hitting it really well, so it was just about as soon as the putts fall I'm going to play better.

And then I starting on No. 10 I started dropping a couple and shot 4-under from there, so pretty solid I would say.

Q. I was going to say, this front nine I feel like is a little more difficult. Do you see any major changes between the front and back nine?

SOPHIA POPOV: You know, I think just for me, because I don't know the course that well and I'm not taking any prejudices into either nine, I didn't think about it all that much.

I know there are a couple holes on each nine that are not that easy. Honestly, if I would have to pick a nine to be a tougher one, I would have said the back. But if you're driving it well and hitting it well it's also scorable. So I think I just kind of, you know -- the whole round I'm like take your chances when you get them and the rest is just solid pars are good.

Q. You and Jess on the back nine trading birdies back and forth. What's it like for you when someone like Jess is doing well in your group? Does it motivate you or are you a stay-in-your-own-lane kind of person?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, we're good friends so I love seeing her play well. She came off to a super hot start, and that was awesome. So it's kind of nice. I can see, okay, the birdies are out there. She's obviously a really solid ball-striker so she's giving herself very good opportunities, and just honestly kept me a little bit more patient.



I was like, I think they're going to come. It's just going to take a little bit longer today. I just -- the weekend at Kia was a little bit tough putting-wise for me, so I think it took me a little bit to drop the first one.

And so seeing her make some honestly made me feel a little bit better. And, yeah, like I said, just made me a little bit more patient.

Q. Your first ANA Inspiration, like I said. What has this week been like for you as you've gotten ready for the first major of the season but coming as a major champion yourself?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, you know, majors are always special, and this one is very special to me even though I've never played it because I've been here a bunch of times watching former teammates of mine and German girls.

So I know the course. I know kind of how it plays. I've just been really looking forward to playing it myself. Definitely fulfilled all my expectations I think I had. The course is in incredible shape.

I'm a little bit bummed I cannot hit it into the wall on 18. I knew it. I knew it. It's my first time playing and they take the wall away. That's a dagger in the heart.

Other than that, no, it's really cool. I mean, the week up until now, it's been as nice as I foresaw it.

Q. There is a German amateur in the field this week, the only amateur. Do you know her? Have you communicated since she won the British Am?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, absolutely. I actually sent her a voice message after the British Am. I thought it was really cool because I do know her. She's obviously a lot younger than me but we did a little bit of a training camp a couple years ago together. She's a good little player.

I think that to me didn't really come as a surprise. It was kind of nice. I was hoping maybe my win was a little bit of an inspiration to her, and she's like you know what, if she can do it, I can do it. I think that was really cool. Now to see her tee it up here and I think at the U.S. -- British? Definitely the British.



Q. She will be at Carnoustie.

SOPHIA POPOV: Carnoustie. Just going to be so special to her. I remember playing the Open as an amateur and it was like some of the most fun I've ever had. So I'm just -- it's nice to see her here and I obviously wish her the best.

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