

Pelican Women's Championship

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Sophia Popov

Quick Quotes

Q. Inspiring today, a day where your score doubled the next best score in the clubhouse and a personal best for you in 64. Did you know something like that might happen today?

SOPHIA POPOV: You know, in yesterday's pro-am I had a good nine holes if you can even, I don't know, rate that at all.

But I was hitting it really well. My ball striking was good. I felt pretty confident coming into the round. Honestly probably didn't see that many birdies on my front, slash the back nine. I thought with the wind the course is playing really tough, and surprised myself a little on that front nine.

Tried to keep it going, but think the other nine are definitely tough and so I'm happy with my score.

Q. Is the play we're seeing out you now indicative of the fact it was always there and you've had time to readjust after the life-changing moment at the Women's Open.

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, I think I'm playing with a different confidence level. You know, the shots are there. I always had them I felt like. I think mentally I've never felt as freed up as I do now.

You know, I don't know if that's from winning the tournament or just overall just having more fun out here. Having obviously an exemption for the next couple years just frees up the swing a little bit, my mindset, I can be a little bit more aggressive, and I think I just took advantage of that.

Q. Are you able to keep that mindset going when you are going low, especially on the front nine, 6-under, and to keep going low?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, you know, I wanted to go lower on the back nine, or the front nine, but I think it was a little



bit tough. I had to -- there were two or three holes that are sneaky long, and I think on those you have to make pars and try to make birdies on the others.

I gave myself a couple good looks on 7 and 8, both of those. One I just leave short online and the other one I thought was in. Kind of called it a little early. A little embarrassing. I definitely thought that was one was in.

So I had some good chances and you could have gone lower, but I'll take that score out here any day.

Q. Sophia, career low. How did it feel?

SOPHIA POPOV: Great, especially on this course. I didn't see this score coming into the round just because from the practice rounds I felt like it was very tough, pretty long course, and obviously windy.

So I'm super happy. I didn't see this coming, so surprised myself a little.

Q. You had five straight birdies on the front nine. What were you thinking in the middle of that run and what led to it?

SOPHIA POPOV: You know, I think the way it usually happens is that you're not thinking, and I think that's what was happening. I was just playing shot after shot and wasn't really thinking about where I was or how many birdies I was making.

The putter was pretty hot, so I just wanted to keep giving myself chances. I felt comfortable on the greens. I wasn't really thinking about the streak very much, but looking back I think I saw my scorecard on the leaderboard and I was like, Yikes, that's better than anticipated.

Q. The greens are pretty big here, and like you mentioned, the wind. Not quite as windy at Royal Troon; maybe not as big as the greens at Royal Troon. How much of those kind of dynamics allow you to familiarize yourself with good memories?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, you know, I like playing in the wind. I was looking forward to a windy week, and I think it



gets the best out of my game. I think it makes you be a little bit more creative also around the greens. With the greens being so big there are so many different shots you can hit. I really enjoy that.

I think that's where I compare it to the Women's Open a little bit where you're kind of putting from off the green quite a bit and, yeah, just use the wind to your advantage instead of fighting it all day. I think I did a good job of that.

Q. You're paired and Jin Young Ko. Were you kind of amped up for that pairing?

SOPHIA POPOV: Honestly, I was pretty excited. I've watched her play a lot of golf on TV previously, and so I kind of know her game from that. I just think she's extremely impressive. I remember having that longest par streak going, and I was rooting her on a lot during that time.

I was just really excited, maybe like fan-girling just a little bit. And she's super sweet, so I think I just really enjoyed it.

Q. Are you still having kind of pinch me moments even now?

SOPHIA POPOV: I think so. Every now and then when I guess I see the trophy, and I get a lot of questions asked about it still now, and I think that always takes me back and brings back nice memories.

So a little bit, but it's time to move on and focus on this event.

Q. Where is the trophy?

SOPHIA POPOV: The trophy is on my nightstand, right where it's supposed to be. (Laughter.)

Q. First thing you see in the morning.

SOPHIA POPOV: First thing I see in the morning.

Q. What was it like? I know there are some fans here, but just in the sense of there is not nearly as many fans as there typically would be. Is that still setting in or what was that vibe like today?

SOPHIA POPOV: You know, it was almost a little bit more than we've previously seen today, which is kind of nice. You hear a little bit of cheering, little bit of clapping going on, so it's kind of nice. You're easing into the crowds hopefully again.

So I am the kind of person I wish we could let in spectators and have a bunch people out there. I quite enjoy having them out. So right around the 18th green it wasn't that bad. It was trying to get used to it a little bit again. Yeah.

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