

Pelican Women's Championship

Friday, November 20, 2020

Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Ally McDonald

Quick Quotes

Q. All right, here with current clubhouse leader, Ally McDonald. Take us through the second day here at Pelican Golf Club.

ALLY McDONALD: Yeah, I was talking a little bit about how my ball striking was just a little off yesterday but managed to play really solid. I was able to strike it better today. Had a few more realistic looks for birdie, and overall I just feel like I'm still rolling the ball really well, which gives me a lot of confidence and takes a little pressure off my ball striking in general. Feel like I don't have to hit had it really, really close.

Yeah, really excited about where I am.

Q. I know you had a hot start this morning with three birdies on your front nine. Just talk us through some of those and what was working right for you.

ALLY McDONALD: Yeah, they moved a couple tees around, but I just played really solid and I had -- I feel like -- I can't even remember the distance putts that I made, but 17 and 18, so my 8th and 9th hole I think was really big for my momentum.

Just to hit a good wedge shot into 17, I made about a 10-footer I think, and on 18 I hit it to about four or five feet and made that.

That made me feel really good and confident making the turn. 1 is a really good hole. If you hit a good drive you have a wedge in. So I was able to take advantage of that as well.

The wind got a little bit -- just a little bit tougher on the back, the last nine, but was able to hang in and play solid golf.

Q. I was going to say, that No. 2 hole seems to be a bit of a challenge, especially for you and Sophia today. What was different about No. 2 today where you had



that bogey?

ALLY McDONALD: Well, it was kind of directly into the wind and the hole location is just a few paces past that false front, so it really requires a really precise approach shot. I hit a great drive. I missed an iron shot, which left me just short.

And then I didn't hit a bad putt up to the hole. Had about six feet. For some reason right around that hole -- it got Sofia and I both -- we left both of our six or seven footers short, so it was just a little slow.

But, yeah, I didn't really feel like out of kilter because it's a hard hole. It's a very intimidating green for your approach shots and just requires you to be pretty precise.

Q. Being able to finish strong with bogey-free the rest of the way there, how important is it to stay consistent on these greens and be able to save pars when you can?

ALLY McDONALD: It's very important. The way some of the greens just fall off, you're going to hit good shots sometimes and have to work to get it up and down. Just kind of how the greens work.

You're always going to have some 40 to 50 footers occasionally, and that just makes the speed control really important.

So, yeah, I just tried to be really patient. It's not all about making a lot of birdies out here. You just have to kind of settle with decent approach shots that give you really good chances for par.

Q. Feels like a repeat of three to four weeks ago at Reynolds Lake Oconee. How much more confident do you feel leading after the second round than like four weeks ago now that we're going into tomorrow?

ALLY McDONALD: Yeah, obviously every day is different. I definitely feel -- I wouldn't say that I feel carefree or careless. I just have a little bit more I guess confidence. I don't feel as stressed about things since I got that win under my belt.



Yeah, I know tomorrow is going to be completely different, but it definitely helps to know that I finished a golf tournament a few weeks ago and still carrying some positive momentum from that.

Q. Is there a part of you that worried that the momentum would get lost in the break?

ALLY McDONALD: Probably, yeah. I mean, it was a good break. I think it was kind of like -- for me I didn't really realize the media stuff. I guess I was naive. I didn't really know. I didn't feel like there was going to be that much attention I had to dedicate after the win.

It was a crazy three weeks, but the first week especially. I can't imagine having to tee it up on a Thursday after that dealing with media stuff.

So I think that was a little bit of a blessing in disguise. I was definitely (indiscernible) with a three-week break, but I'm happy with where my game is right now.

Q. How many interviews are we talking about?

ALLY McDONALD: Well, I did a lot of local stuff. Just like magazine, some Mississippi State people. Yeah, I probably really didn't get to everybody, so had to have been somewhere between five to seven, something like that, with Morning Drive and everything included.

Q. You had a pretty good pairing. What's it like playing with Jin Young and Sophia, and especially the way you and Sophia were going back and forth today. That has to help having the competitiveness in the group.

ALLY McDONALD: Yeah, for sure. Sophia is playing great golf and the Jin Young is the No. 1 player in the world. It was a very comfortable pairing. Both girls I really enjoy playing with.

To see somebody else playing the course really well, it definitely makes you -- you can kind of feed off each other, but it also makes you be super into it. Because it's kind of easy if you get a little bit of -- little too comfortable you can let things slip away.

So it was a great pairing. Definitely comfortable pairing with those two.

Q. The first few years of your career there was some incremental progress. Since the tour resumed after the COVID break you're playing much better. What do you see is the difference?

ALLY McDONALD: Well, I wouldn't say that there is a huge difference. It's kind of -- so much about playing solid is everything coming together at once. I've had -- despite COVID I've had a lot of really great things happen in life. I got married. It's just been like an accumulation of different things.

It's not necessarily the fact that I did anything different. It's just kind of maybe a few little positive things have helped me build that momentum and be able to put a couple more shots here and there into a round that might be a 2-under versus an even par or 5-under versus 3-under.

I think those things are really important. Yeah, I don't feel like anything has been super different, but definitely I've played solid golf this last a little bit.

Q. Is it possible getting away from golf for a few months helped? I am sure you were practicing, but planning a wedding and doing things like that, did it have in I mindset change?

ALLY McDONALD: I guess it could have just a little bit, but it's definitely -- I definitely enjoyed my time away from golf for a little bit. It kind of felt normal just seeing my family when I could. Just kind of laying low for a little while. That was something very unfamiliar that I probably haven't done since junior golf days.

The time away was probably refreshing. Even though I worked really hard during that time, I definitely did have some really good down time. Probably could play a little bit of a role in it for sure.

Q. (Regarding moving a wedding up as opposed to pushing it off.)

ALLY McDONALD: It was actually probably somewhat simple. The people coming went from about 200 to 50. Once we got the clear from Mississippi to have an outdoor gathering around 50 people we knew where we were going to have it. It was just throwing a few more things together with the reception and stuff like that, making sure we're following good social distancing guidelines.

We wanted to keep our grandparents safe and anybody who might not feel comfortable during that time. So, yeah, it wasn't super stressful. It probably was less stressful than planning a full 200-person wedding, to be honest with you.

Q. Okay.

ALLY McDONALD: Yeah.

Q. Do you feel like you're playing the best golf of your life right now?

ALLY McDONALD: It's definitely up there. I mean, I don't think you can win out here unless you're playing really well. You can't really fake it. So I definitely feel on a confident spectrum probably pretty close to the highest I've ever been, especially what I've built off Solheim last year, too.

I just feel like I have a lot of the positive things happening outside of golf as well that it's just everything in general feels really solid right now. I think the happiness off the golf course translates to even better golf, to be honest.

Q. As I said, your career grew incrementally but there wasn't a big jump. Do you have stages if you wonder if these days are going to come?

ALLY McDONALD: Not necessarily. After I won I definitely -- I remember saying I've never doubted my ability, but I definitely questioned whether I could win out here. I've never ever doubted whether I can compete every single week out here, whether that is competing for a top 20 or working really hard to make a cut.

That has never been doubted by me personally, because I feel like I've worked hard enough to be here and that I've got a lot of people around me just constantly supporting and have poured so much into me that I believe in myself.

Like I said, until I got this win I didn't really know if I could get that win.

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