

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 19, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Ashleigh Buhai

Quick Quotes

Q. Here with Ashleigh Buhai coming off her first round at the Hilton Grant vacations Tournament of Champions. Take us through your round today and how you enjoyed playing with Mardy and Adam.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Wow, what a fun format. Obviously my first time playing in this tournament, and yeah, so good to play with both of them. They bomb the ball, so we play a little different game, but I just stuck to it, plotted my way around, no bogeys. First day back at the office, if you want to call it that, I'll definitely take it. Very steady.

Q. Were you and Mardy sort of feeding off each other? He's sort of leading the celeb leaderboard and you're at the top of our leaderboard.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, we were. It was so much fun. He was holing some bombs and then telling me to, and we were fist bumping out there whenever one of us had a good hole. It was one hullabaloo kind of day.

Q. This format normally people take a while to get accustomed to it because you're out there and you have to remind yourself this isn't pro-am day. How did you make that adjustment?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I think what I actually enjoyed so much about the format is you're just relaxed, and the guys I played with, Adam and Mardy, they're good golfers, so it helped. As I said, we fed off each other. Some of the other pro-am tournaments I've played in, I've enjoyed it, too, and I think it kind of suits me. I feel I drop the intensity a little bit, which I think is always a very good thing and just kind of try and be more laid back and play like it is maybe a Wednesday or a Thursday to a Sunday.

Q. I've talked to a lot of players this week who basically hadn't even cleaned their clubs since Christmas, much less hit them. What did you do during the off-season?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, my season was a little shorter because I went and played the Australian Open down there, so I was in Australia for two weeks, then went back to South Africa for a month, didn't touch a club for three and a half weeks, and once I did take them out, they were a little dusty, and the body was a little rusty, too. But by last week I started to feel like, okay, I'm starting to find it again, and the goal this week was just to kind of see where my game was at, try to do little things well that I did towards the end of last season, and then we'll see where it is and where we have to improve.

Q. This is one of those nice perks that you might not think about immediately when you win. What's the sense of accomplishment just being here?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, I think it's like so early in the season, it's a bit of a -- it's a good and a bad thing because a lot of us would have liked some off time, but to know you can start off here with 30 odd players, no cut, guaranteed money, what a format, what a week, that Hilton and everybody else put on here, and now that I've played in it, obviously I want to keep coming back.

I think it is a good way to start the season off to make sure you get four rounds in and kind of see where your game is at.

Q. What was good in your game today?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I drove the ball really well. I was very patient because I didn't hit it close with my irons. I holed out well from I'd say four to five feet. I had a few testy par putts that kept me in it, but Dave, my husband, is caddying for me this week. My regular caddie is unfortunately frustrated hitting it close enough hang in there you're doing not here, and he just said to me coming down the last, I was starting to get a little frustrated, just hang in there, you're doing a good job, let's just try and get more in the last three holes, and I holed a really nice putt on 18 for birdie.

Q. How often does Dave carry the bag?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: He caddied in Australia, so we got the W in Australia, which what a way to end the year. He caddied for me for eight years, and nobody knew my game better, nobody knows me better personally, and now I think

where we're at, it's a lot more relaxed. He's been caddying, I think, for 12 years, so I'm experienced, he's experienced. We go out there, we know we have a job to do, and you can't let the relationship get involved at all, and we keep it professional, and then it's fun just to do every now and then but not all the time.

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