

Meijer LPGA Classic

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Blythefield Country Club

Rachel Kuehn

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the online and in-person media center here at the Meijer LPGA Classic for Simply Give.

I am pleased to be joined by one of the sponsor invites, Rachael Kuehn. Rachel, welcome to Grand Rapids and welcome to another event on the LPGA Tour. This is your second tour appearance from what I can remember.

What it is like to be back out here?

RACHEL KUEHN: Oh, it's so cool. It's such a different vibe from college golf, so I'm really excited tort opportunity, really thankful for the opportunity to be out here this week.

You know, any chance you have to test your game against the best golfers in the world you should jump on it, so I'm really appreciative of the invite I've gotten and really excited to tee it up starting tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: I know you came from the Arnold Palmer Cup. What was that like for you to be able to turn it back on now to a Tour experience?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I came straight from the Arnold Palmer Cup, which was only about a six-hour drive from here.

Again, different vibe because obviously you're playing with a team out there and I know all the girls and guys out there. So to come out here and not have quite as many familiar faces, but to kind of keep those competitive juices flowing, definitely really excited.

But it's a different mode, I guess, than last week.

THE MODERATOR: I know from 2022 when we last saw you at the Palos Verdes Championship, you had your mom on the bag from what I remember.

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: I know this week you have someone

different on the bag. Care to explain?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, so last time I was out here my mom was on the bag and my mom is a golfer so she gets it.

But this weekend my boyfriend, Alex, is on the bag. He's also a professional golfer, so I am really thankful he could be here. He's playing over in Europe most of this year.

He said he was going to come watch. I was like, well, I guess if you're going to be here, do you want to caddie? Luckily took me up on it. I think we'll work well with him on the bag and I'm excited to spend some of the time with him.

We're both excited get the week started.

Q. I imagine this is the long-term dream, to be out here. What route are you thinking to get on this tour?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, so I just finished my undergrad at Wake Forest and I am going to come back from my COVID year. Coach decided she could take me back luckily. So I have one more year there, and then I am going to go to Q-School the fall of '24, and hopefully get my card through Q-School.

That's the plan.

Q. And what does this do for your game as far as testing and seeing where you are?

RACHEL KUEHN: Absolutely. Again, I kind of said, but any chance you get to test kind of where your game is compared to the best players in the world, you need to jump on it, because any experience out here, even as an amateur, when you're first turning pro, whatever it is, it's all experience under the belt and it's going to be experience that can serve me when it comes down to hopefully starting on the LPGA as a professional.

Q. First off, you just said playing college and here, a little different. What makes it different for you? What did you see that's different?



RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, in college you have a team of people around you, right? There is your teammates, your coaches. It's a little less lonely I think; whereas out here it's really me and my caddie. My mom is here to watch this week, so my circle is way smaller here versus in college.

Even just the past couple practice rounds the vibe is really different, right? There is a lot of people, a lot of outside noise; whereas I say I think in a college tournament you're there and there is not a lot of the chitchatting going on. It's you're there to win a college golf tournament.

Out here I think there is more reps on the range and people are trying to get their games a little more in shape because you are going week onto week onto week; whereas in college you have breaks to kind of do that stuff back at home. All that stuff has to happen out here.

I just think it's just very different. (Laughter.)

Q. Is there somebody that you saw on the range or on the practice green where you were like, oh, my God, that's so-and-so? Did you have a shellshocked moment a little bit this week or what?

RACHEL KUEHN: I think I've more kept my head down this week and tried to look at it more as I'm here to play a guy a golf tournament rather than be star struck.

It's been fun to see a couple girls that I know really well that have turned pro. I actually get to play with a couple of them this week. I just saw the pairing sheet, which is really cool.

But I think there has been less of those moments and more of, I'm here to hopefully bring my A game.

Q. What would you say is a priority for you this week? Is there a certain part of your game you're trying to focus on, or just overall getting used to playing LPGA golf?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, think it's a little bit of both. It is getting experience to understand what it takes to compete out here week in and week out, but think to be successful on this golf course you need to drive the golf ball really well, and that's something that I worked really hard on in the past year and a half, so hopefully that work can show this week.

I do think every part your game needs to be in shape to play well on this golf course.

Q. Has your boyfriend caddied for you before or is this

the first time?

RACHEL KUEHN: No. First time. See how the relationship stands after the week.

Q. I was going to say, because there are some people who that's kind of close and you're like, I can't work with you.

RACHEL KUEHN: This is the trial run. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: This is also another experience that we've seen you since Wake Forest took the team championships at the NCAA Division I Championships.

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Just what was that experience like for you? It was just over a month ago, but here we are.

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, NAAs was a blur in like the best way possible. I don't think I've stopped smiling since the event. It's a long week, a marathon of a week in 110 degrees out in Arizona.

It's something that we always when set up practices back at Wake, we don't do it with the next tournament in the mind, we did it with Grayhawk in mind.

And so to go out and see all that work come to fruition was really rewarding, and I was really proud of every single person on our team. Everyone brought their A game and showed up at the right moments.

Takes a little bit of luck to win in match play, but I definitely think the work we put in helped us be successful that week. It was really rewarding.

THE MODERATOR: It's led to a very busy month for you as we talked about. As you refocus here at Blythefield Country Club, have you been able to get a practice round in or what are your thoughts on the course so far?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I was able to play a practice round yesterday and play a couple more holes early this morning. I think it's really important to drive the golf ball well. The rough is thick. The fairways are tight. I think you need to be able to play the golf course from the fairway.

Secondly, the greens are pretty firm, so you need to have your distances under control with your approach shots to the green, and I think the key is going to be fairways and greens.

I feel like I say that on every golf course, but especially

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

here where the rough is so thick and the chips around the green are a little delicate. Again, something I've worked hard on my driving getting to know my distances in this elevation, this temperature, so hopefully that will lead so ever to some successful golf this week.

THE MODERATOR: A lot of golf ahead of us. Without putting a goal in mind or in front of you, what are some of the of the expectations you've personally set for yourself this week, or is it just taking it one shot at a time?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, definitely a little bit of a one-shot-at-a-time mentality, because you never want to get too far ahead of yourself.

I want to show up with the best game I have and see where that lands me. I think if I'm driving it well, I am hoping I can make the cut and see where that goes from there.

Q. Giving your wake ties, any connection with Jennifer Kupcho? She been helpful along the road?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, absolutely. Jen is such a sweetheart. She reached out after NCAAs to say congrats and all this stuff. It's been amazing to see what she's done out here. We're all cheering her on from back home.

When I played my last LPGA event last spring we had dinner and she was able to share her thoughts and she let me pick her brain. She was really kind to let me pick her brain about turning pro, what to do, what not to do, she would've done differently.

It's really nice to be able to get insight from someone who came out and had pretty immediate success.

Q. Where did you play the Palmer Cup, and how did you do?

RACHEL KUEHN: So Palmer Cup it was at Laurel Valley just outside of Pittsburgh, and Team USA won, which was very exciting.

Q. You played pretty well?

RACHEL KUEHN: Yeah, I played well. I won only one of my matches, but I thought I played some good golf even though the matches didn't go quite how I wanted them to.

Q. I know your mother was a terrific player. I covered her amateur days. How much of a role did that play in your development, or is it something you kind of had to find your way into golf?

RACHEL KUEHN: She was very instrumental in helping me develop strategy and kind of course management more. She self admittedly doesn't know much about the golf swing and the technical side of things, so she was never my swing coach, nothing like that.

But kind of in the maturity levels of how you should manage the golf course, how you need to control your emotions, stuff like that, she has been the person who has taught me and gotten me where I am today in that aspect.

She was just someone who always inspired me. And my whole family plays golf, so it was always something we did together. Mom especially. I had really big shoes to fill, because like you said, she was an incredible amateur and played pro for a little bit.

But our relationship extends beyond the golf course, too, which has been great.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you, Rachel, for joining us, and best of luck this week.

RACHEL KUEHN: Thank you.

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