

Dow Championship

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Midland, Michigan, USA

Midland Country Club

Rose Zhang

Alexa Pano

Press Conference



growing up. Same for her. I've seen her hit some crazy shots. I know she has all the shots in the bag when the time comes.

Q. Has there been any discussion about a team name or walk-up song or any options you're looking at right now as the deadline approaches?

ALEXA PANO: There's been so much discussion about it, probably more discussion than strategy. But our team name this week is Rolexa, just kind of combining our names. We're still working on a walk-up song. Yeah, it was probably the hardest decision to make so far.

ROSE ZHANG: We gave it to the polls on Instagram for them to kind of be creative with it.

Q. Rose, I wanted to ask you about the Olympic team, just your general feelings on the excitement level and how you feel about being headed to Paris.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I'm super excited. It's honestly something that I never really expected to happen this quick. I just think that I was so whooped up on just being able to play week in, week out on Tour against the best in the world, and to be able to compete against the best while representing your own country is honestly such a great honor in itself. It's what every single athlete dreams of.

It's very humbling that I was able to be able to get that spot on the U.S. Team and be able to tee it up at the Olympics.

I've watched the Olympics ever since I was five. So being able to see all the other sports, all the other athletes just compete and kind of get that medal or even just wear their flag with pride, it's something that I've always watched and felt inspired by.

Q. Was it something that was on your radar or was it after the win in New Jersey that it clicked that this was a possibility?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it was definitely after Jersey where it did click a little bit more. I almost didn't really want to think about it too much because just there was a lot of golf

THE MODERATOR: I'm joined here at the media center at the Dow Championship by Rose Zhang and Alexa Pano, who will be playing together this week. Talk a little bit about how excited you are for the week and the opportunity to play with each other.

ROSE ZHANG: I'm super excited. We grew up playing AJGAs together. We've participated in Junior Solheim, Junior Ryder Cup together. It's just super fun to go into this week knowing a really good friend, ever since we were itty-bitty and just going out and having fun.

This event is so unique on the LPGA schedule, so being able to really just have a partner, enjoy the time, is very special.

ALEXA PANO: Yeah, I think the theme for this week is just to have as much fun as possible. We've been looking forward to this for a while now, and like Rose said, growing up together was so special, and now being able to live out our dreams on Tour together is really cool, and getting to experience an event as partners is going to be amazing.

Q. Has there been any conversation about the strategy for foursomes versus four-ball? You know each other's games and what complements each other. How are you hoping to mesh that all together this week?

ALEXA PANO: I think we're going to play this afternoon and see if there's any strategy on this course. I don't know, I feel like we know each other's games pretty decently well, and we're quite comfortable with each other, which I think will be to our benefit.

I know she's a great player, so I think she'll do all right.

ROSE ZHANG: Same goes for her. But I'd say, yeah, we grew up just playing so much golf together. I think she knows my game just as well as a lot of other players



left to be played early in the season. Honestly, if I was to only focus on making the Olympics, it would have been a little bit more difficult to play shot by shot, green by green when I'm out there competing. So I was able to really kind of give myself more of the opportunity to think about it after Jersey.

Q. What is it about the experience you're most looking forward to? Are you going to hang out in the Olympic Village, or are you just going to treat it like another tournament week?

ROSE ZHANG: No, I'm going to savor it for sure. I plan on hanging around the Olympic Village. I played the Pan-American Games back in 2018, 2019, I believe, in Lima, and just being with so many different athletes, seeing everyone doing their own thing, coming in with the medals that they won, it was a really special experience, and I'm sure the Olympics will definitely top that.

But it's something that I want to kind of savor and just enjoy.

Q. You've had a lot of huge amateur experience, big stages, and then Solheim Cup was a huge stage. Do you think those kind of events will help you, because this is going to be the biggest worldwide stage you're going to be on.

ROSE ZHANG: I think it will definitely help. Just having the experience of repping the red, white and blue, going out there and competing not just for yourself but for your country, there's a lot of pride to that.

I think being on those stages, I was able to really experience the blessing of just competing for the U.S. and especially at an Olympic stage. It's going to be kind of surreal being able to do that, too. It's obviously a bigger stage, but you just have to treat it as any other golf event when you're playing, but really savoring it is important.

Q. Alexa, what's it going to be like to see your good friend planing in the Olympics? What's the experience like as a viewer?

ALEXA PANO: I'm so proud of her. To be able to do that in the short amount of time that she's been on Tour is insane and obviously very inspiring to me, getting to watch her accomplish all these amazing things. Hopefully in four years' time, I'll be able to follow in her footsteps. But I'm so excited to watch her go get that gold.

Q. As one of the younger duos out here this week, how do you hope to use that to your advantage? And I was going to ask about you guys got out here early on

Tour. What's it been like to see some of your friends that are working their way up to getting to this point, as well? What's it like to follow along with them, they follow along with you?

ALEXA PANO: Yeah, I think especially when Rose got out on Tour for me, it was kind of like a breath of fresh air because everyone knew each other from long-term out here, but having one of my childhood friends get out here, it just brought me a lot of familiarity.

I know we root constantly for all of our friends, her old teammates, and eager for them to get out here with us because it's such an amazing experience getting to compete every week with the best in the world, and getting to do that with someone that you consider like a sister or best friend just makes it even better.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, when I was back in school, I saw Alexa turn pro, and she was already doing so much on the Tour level. I think I was also just very inspired by that, just watching her put in the work week in, week out. I know it's a whole lifestyle, and Alexa has been really living that out. I was inspired when I came out here and it was nice to have Alexa to be able to bounce back ideas or moments even when we have down times to really just be able to have fun, interact and just genuinely have a friend on Tour. That was what really helped me transition, too.

Q. You both mentioned familiarity. Since you two are childhood friends, Alexa, this is your second time here, Rose, this is your first. Talk about your familiarity with being foursomes and four-ball matches; does that give you guys almost a comfort level when you go out and start playing on Thursday?

ALEXA PANO: Yeah, I think trusting each other is a big thing in foursomes and there's almost no one out here I trust more than Rose, so that's why I picked her as my partner.

But yeah, it's a really fun event. Like you said, it's my second time being here, and I had the best time here last year, and so I'm just excited to get to do it again.

It's a unique format out here, but I think foursomes is one of my favorite formats in golf, and so I'm really looking forward to teeing it up here again.

ROSE ZHANG: Same. I think the thing about foursomes and four-ball, just being with a partner, obviously there's a bit more pressure to try to help your partner or contribute to the team, but I think since both of us know that there's always going to be little mishaps on the golf course, I like to think that it wouldn't waver us too much from just



enjoying each other's company when we're out there playing but also trying to get back into it.

As long as we have that preparation in front of us, I think it'll be good, regardless.

Q. Stacy Lewis was in here earlier. We asked her, she's playing with Maria, but as the U.S. Solheim Cup captain, and this is a similar type of format and team event, is that in the back of your mind with you two as you both played in the Junior Solheim Cup, Rose, you played in the Solheim Cup last year, do you take that experiences playing in the Solheim Cup and those team events into this week, and is the Solheim Cup going to be in the back of your mind this week?

ALEXA PANO: I mean, yeah, the Junior Solheim Cups, Junior Ryder Cups are really the only other places I've played this kind of format before coming out on Tour, so a lot of that experience I use towards this week and getting familiar with having a partner and a team and stuff like that. Those experiences were super valuable to me and a big reason why I love the foursomes four-ball format so much.

Yeah, I think Solheim is kind of like always on everyone's mind, but you're kind of putting it in the back of your head and just trying to play the best you can week in and week out and obviously just enjoy this week.

ROSE ZHANG: She couldn't have said it any better.

Q. Alexa, we're coming up on the year anniversary of your first win and your birthday. What's it going to be like to relive some of those memories, seeing the pictures back again on your phone, snapshot memories, everything like that?

ALEXA PANO: Yeah, it's exciting. I think 20 is a big number. I'm leaving my teens, which is scary.

Yeah, it's exciting. I don't think we have an event that ends on my birthday this year, but I know the British Open is pretty close, so maybe we'll try and resurge some of that magic that I had last year.

Q. Rose, talk a little bit about the start of turning pro and the excitement with that and how it's led to Solheim, just kind of the whole year and a little bit more and that journey that you've had.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it honestly still feels like a blur, just because everything happened so fast and so quick. That summer, just finishing nationals, then announcing I turned pro, playing Mizuho, getting my Tour card, and then playing the rest of the majors really well that year helped

set up just my position to be able to make it to the Solheim.

It was not on my radar at all because I was full-on expecting to go to Q-school in the fall. But being able to play in front of such huge crowds in Spain and actually being teammates with the people that I watched on TV, with Stacy as my captain, it was such a dream, and couldn't have had a better rookie season or a more fulfilling one.

I always said that I wanted to learn a lot from just the inside the ropes, outside the ropes of Tour life, and that's what I've been trying to do, and honestly I think this year has been a lot more learning, learning curves, than even last year because now that I'm settled in, I'm slowly still navigating what Tour life is about.

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