

Cognizant Founders Cup

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

West Caldwell, New Jersey, USA

Mountain Ridge Country Club

Amari Avery

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, here with Amari Avery at the Cognizant Founders Cup. Amari, you had a great showing at the John Shipman Shootout to earn your exemption here. Tell me about that experience and what it means to you to be playing here at the Cognizant Founders Cup.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I mean, it was a great experience. Just playing in the John Shipman was a great opportunity for me and others like me. We had two exemptions. One was to go into the Dow match play, and my teammate at the time, Bailey Davis, we were trying to get into that one but we finished third and got into the Shootout.

Was trying my best to get to that one individual spot. That was really my goal for the week and I got it done and I'm so glad I'm here.

Q. What was the overall experience like there at the John Shipman? It seemed like such an amazing event and certainly an event and for great cause.

AMARI AVERY: Right. Yeah, I mean, Cognizant and the John Shipman and people who ran the event, they did a great job of including diversity into the tournament and making that such a big part of the event.

Summer Woods who ran the event, she did a great job. I've played in many events and I've played in few professional events, and I would have to say hers is pretty top tier. For a first year, as well. She ran a great event. She did a great job of giving us all a great opportunity.

Q. You have played in a lot of events. I've got your World Amateur Golf Ranking page up. The Rolex Tournament of Champions, The Silver Bell, the ANWA, the Girls Junior, won the Cal State Amateur a couple years ago.

AMARI AVERY: Right.

Q. You're no stranger to the game of golf. How has it been a great opportunity for you to get all of these experiences at such a young age?

AMARI AVERY: It's amazing. When I got older I definitely want to be out here. This is the career I've been working so hard for, so to get that experience through many great events means so much to me, and I hope to keep making more.

Q. You won the Mack Champ Invitational earlier this year. Got to play in a Symetra Tour event. Played your of first Women's Open. How have these tastes of pro golf for you, I know you still got college on the radar, but that's a cool thing about golf, is you can see what your job might be down the road.

AMARI AVERY: Right, yeah. So I've been in a few pro events, like mini tours and obviously U.S. Open and here and then Symetra, so I've played on pretty much all levels of professional golf so far. Getting that experience as an amateur, seeing what pro life can be like, has been amazing. I've talked to many girls here and in other events as well and they've given me great advice.

Q. We've got your resume in terms of where you finished and where you've played. Without talking about that, tell me your story in the game.

AMARI AVERY: I got started when I was three years old from my dad. He was heavily influenced by Tiger Woods, and even I am still to this day. He got me into golf, and it was an aspiration of his and has been a very big dream of mine.

Without the tournaments, I mean, and all the accolades that I've had, it's just been an amazing journey.

Q. Early on when did you realize, Hey, I'm pretty good at this and I would like to do it?

AMARI AVERY: I would say when I was about six or seven. My dad and I worked very hard, and I still do now. When I was younger I won a lot, so I just kind of was like, I'm pretty good at this. I should probably stick with it.

Q. When you come into an event like this, do you have any expectations? What are your thoughts as you tee



up?

AMARI AVERY: Right, I don't really have too many expectations. Like I said, I'm still an amateur, so not really out here trying to do much. Just get the experience.

Just trying to be nice to myself and not be so hard on myself out here. Just want to gain the experience and put the best game out.

Q. As experience goes, it's different when you step inside gallery ropes than going into a junior event. Have you become accustomed to that now?

AMARI AVERY: I wouldn't say I've become accustomed to it. I'm still trying to learn how to be inside the ropes. It's obviously a great experience. It's a wonderful thing to be inside the ropes, but I'm still trying to get used to it.

Seeing the caddies prep for players out here and just be with the pros out here, it's definitely new to, me but something I want to get used to.

Q. How many events have you played this year?

AMARI AVERY: I've only played in a few. I know with COVID and everything it kind of set some things back, but I've been slowly getting into a better schedule and obviously played some pretty great events.

Q. Who do you look up to in the game, outside of the game? Who are some of your role models in life?

AMARI AVERY: I would say for golf Tiger Woods is probably my biggest inspiration, but there is a whole bunch outside of golf itself. Kobe Bryant was a great inspiration of mine, a great mentality, and that's what I try to instill into my game.

Serena and Venus Williams, very strong people, women especially. To use that as an example for me out here, that's what I like to use.

Q. You mention women. It's great. We see it around the LPGA Tour every day, getting companies like Cognizant that are looking into the women's game and bringing diversity into the game. You're a face of that this week. One of the first ones able to take advantage of that. What's that honor as you see the game growing as it needs to, to be a new face of the game for so many different people?

AMARI AVERY: Right, yeah, I'm glad Cognizant is taking a step in the right direction. Other companies and brands are trying to be more inclusive of women and trying to

diversify the game as well.

I'm glad to be a part of that and one the first to start this thing with Cognizant, and I'm hoping they will keep this continuing on for the rest of the...

Q. Talked about outside the ropes. Let's go inside the ropes here at Mountain Ridge. Everyone who has come here so far has said it's like a major course.

AMARI AVERY: Oh, yeah.

Q. How many holes have you played? I know you're going out in the pro-am. What's your first reaction the Mountain Ridge?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, so I've played 27 holes so far. Played 9 on Monday and 18 yesterday, so I've gotten a good glimpse of the golf course. I like it a lot. Reminds me of a major event, especially U.S. Open.

To me it's a little bit easier than Olympic. The fairway is a bit bigger, rough isn't as thick, the greens are much bigger. But the greens are definitely tough as well though, so never not a challenge out here.

But should be a good week. I like the course.

Q. What are the strengths of your game and do you think this is a course that will work to those strengths?

AMARI AVERY: Right, yeah, so I think driving the ball is one of my biggest strengths out here, and I think this course really takes to that. The fairways are much bigger, and like I said, the rough isn't as thick, so I can miss it just a little bit and I'll still be okay.

The greens are pretty big, so my approach shots -- they shouldn't miss the greens too many times.

And my putting has also been a great strength of mine, so I'm hoping that will work for me this week and get the ball rolling.

Q. Who is caddying for you this week?

AMARI AVERY: Dad is a caddying this week. He was trying get me a professional caddie for the week and I said, You gotten me to so many places and given me so many experiences. I want you to be inside and experience it for yourself instead being outside the ropes.

So he's on the bag.

Q. That's good. Hope you guys are still talking by the

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

end of week, dad. Overall what are you hoping to get of this week and all the events that you're playing as you start rounding down the end of your junior career and looking toward college?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, so I go to USC in January, so this will probably be one of my last events of the year. Really trying to close out in style. If I play well, if I don't, it's not a big deal. I'm just here for the experience. And getting to meet all girls out here, I'm very familiar with a lot them, and I hope to meet more.

They've given me great advice and they have all been great to me, telling me if I need any help to look to them.

We have a great of women out here to look forward to.

Q. Just before when you mentioned some of the people you looked up to not just in golf but many athletes outside of the sport have you had any contact with anybody? Has anyone given you any type of advice in terms of trying to come up?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, right. I haven't really had a ton of contact with them. They're great athletes and powerful people so they're kind of all over the place and it's hard to get in touch with them.

I have some connects and people that have tried to get me with them, so, I mean, hopefully soon I'll be able to get in contact with them and talk with them. For now, just here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports