

Cognizant Founders Cup

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Clifton, New Jersey, USA

Upper Montclair Country Club

Paige Crawford

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome everybody to the media center with Paige Crawford, our John Shippen Cognizant Cup champion. Congratulations on getting into the field.

We will start with an easy question. Going to be playing in your first LPGA event this week. What are you most looking forward to?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: I'm just mostly looking forward to being out on the course honestly and experiencing it, being inside the ropes for once.

I'm just so grateful for it opportunity.

Q. What did you like or find so challenging about the course get when you were playing in the John Shippen?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Definitely I would say the fairways are pretty tight and also the greens. Like when you go past the pin it's really fast. When you're going uphill it can be kind of slow, so that transition of figuring out the speed is difficult.

Q. Uh-huh. Does this golf course feel like a different golf course than any you played before just with the builds and everything going on? Does it add any pressure to you?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: No, doesn't add pressure. It's really cool. I'm really enjoying this. I played two Epson events so I kind of got a little feel with that, with the stands and the ropes a little bit, so it's not that big after deal to me.

It's more of I'm just so excited to play this beautiful course.

Q. Speaking of the Epson Tour, I know you had some Epson experience last year. Tell us how the Epson experience helped prepare you for this opportunity.

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yes, the Epson experience definitely helped me prepare. I actually got to see how it is. Like it



made my feel like I was on tour and I actually really enjoyed that. The courses were so nice.

This is a really nice course and the environment is just really cool. You have a lot of perks, which is really nice. Usually I'm playing mini tour events so definitely a different experience.

Q. Yeah. And the John Shippen helping make this experience possible, how excited were you when you found out you were going to be playing in the John Shippen Cognizant Cup?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: I was so excited to play in this event. I've never been to Jersey, New Jersey before, so really excited about that and really excited to play on a course with bent grass.

That's what I grew up with in Colorado. Bermuda is always an adjustment for me. So just really excited to finally play a well nice course with bent grass, with history, going to a different state.

I'm just so grateful for John Shippen. They are amazing, and giving Black golfers to the opportunity to get to experience playing at a higher level, it's really amazing.

Q. This week is a big week, I don't know if you know, for our Girls Golf program with the LPGA. How excited are you to just be out here and being able to play in front of all the little girls out here watching all week?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: It's so exciting. Really cool actually because I started in an LPGA Girls' Golf program. They were like, you need to start playing golf tournaments. They helped me figure that all out.

So it was is really exciting. I want more Black golfers to be playing, more Black girls to be playing golf, and hopefully that's just going to keep going.

Q. What sort of is exciting about playing with the other LPGA members out here? Any players you're particularly excited to see, meet, just out on the course this week?



PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yes, well, definitely Mel Reid. She seems like a fun person. Ryann O'Toole; followed her all eight days at the 2011 U.S. Women's Open at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. Maybe she'll remember me. I got to meet her family and stuff.

So those people, and Riley Rennell just from mini tour events and Epson.

So that's nice to have a familiar face. Really Stacy, too. Just everybody. I watched a lot of golf growing up and it's amazing to be inside the ropes with them.

Q. How do you plan on managing being a fan and also, wait, I'm here to play golf as well?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: It's kind of hard to because sometimes they walk by me and I get a little nervous, but it's just really cool. I'm trying to just really focus on my game and really focus on my routine I would say. Just really focusing on the routine.

Q. I know you guys didn't take the van this week. How was a traveling via airplane? I know you usually travel in a van. Tell us about that experience and just how important it is for you just be out on the golf course.

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yeah, it was actually kind of weird traveling on an airplane. It's weird. We don't know what to pack. What should we pack?

In the van we have everything we need, so it's really hard for us and having a different bed. I did bring my pillow because that's really important.

It's really different. We really miss the van. It's our home. It's kind of hard. We wish we had it. But I definitely prefer the van.

Q. You did bring Megan with you. How good is it to have her support? Any other supporters coming out this week to see you?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Definitely great to have Megan. She keeps me calm and knows me really well and gives me pep talks and stuff like that.

Yeah, a few people. Alison Johnson with Carrie (phonetic). I met her through Carrie. She's coming. She lives here.

And one of my first sponsors, first sponsors who has caddied for me once, Kelly, he's going to try to come out, too, so that will be really exciting.

Q. He won't be caddieing for you this week?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: No, I wish. He's working. Megan is caddieing for me this week.

Q. Oh, really?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q. Wow. Has Megan ever caddied for you before?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yes, a few times.

Q. Last question from me. What were your expectations for yourself this week? Hopefully not putting too much pressure, but expectations for your game and yourself playing this week?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yeah, I do put a lot of pressure on myself, but this week is all been about gratitude and just appreciating the moment. I'm just going to just have fun out there. I don't care what happens, what the score is, so just going to have fun out there.

Q. Amazing. So yesterday when you were out during the shootout, were you aware that you were leading or what was going on around you? Were you aware of where you chalked up with the rest of competitors?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: No, I knew I was down a little bit making the turn, but I really had no idea. Honestly it was pretty cool because I felt like I was playing match play with my opponents and I'm very competitive. I grew up playing basketball, too.

So I was just really focused on trying to get the ball in the hole. I was starting to I guess towards the end know something was going on because it was like, why is the camera so close to me? I wasn't trying to think about it. I was just trying to get the ball in the hole.

Q. What has been your journey to the game? I was doing a little research on you: From Colorado, Montana State University. A great university, but not necessarily known for its golf team perhaps. What has been your road to get here to now making your LPGA debut?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Yeah, so growing up in Colorado I just played local tournaments. I didn't get to play like tournaments outside of the state. Actually during basketball season in college I went to a golf combine in Vegas and the weather was terrible.

I met Leslie Spalding who used to be on the LPGA Tour for



ten years and we just really clicked. And then I went on a trip to Montana State and I liked it and liked the team, so I went there. Then she left after a year, but I still liked Montana. It was a cute town. Bozeman is really cool.

Then after that, I graduated. I won Big Sky Conference Championships and still have the record for that luckily in 2013.

After that I graduated, but I started playing mini tours and that's really expensive and I did not have the funds. My parents were helping a little bit, and so I was only playing four or five tournaments a year at the most.

In between I was helping my sister take care of my nephew. He's 14 now. And then I got a few jobs and I was saving up. Worked at a climbing gym, worked at the golf course, and Door Dash during COVID time and was just saving all I could.

Then Megan got the van. We were doing a lot of car camping before she got the van. I was like, okay, I guess I'm going to quit my jobs and I was really scared about it. Luckily I went to Florida and played in the match play event and I end up finding a sponsor then.

So last year was my first time playing full time ever. So it's really amazing. I'm so grateful for this opportunity. At my age a lot of girls stop playing, but I just had to keep going. I couldn't help it.

Leslie is still a big part of my life. I saw her a month ago in San Diego and she actually bought me new wedges. Thank goodness. I needed them.

So really cool.

Q. I was going to ask, I don't want to say you're older than the average first-time LPGA player, and I say that as one of the old people here on tour. I say, do it for the grown ups. For the people still reaching for their dreams, who have that resilience to keep going, what did it take for you to really keep at this? And now you're 32?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: 31. This year I'm turning 32.

Q. Still, you're doing it for the grown ups. What was in you to keep doing it?

PAIGE CRAWFORD: I just love the game. From since I was seven years old when I started watching it I wanted to play golf, which is weird. I loved watching it. I don't know. I feel like I'm a late bloomer.

The great thing about golf is it's a sport you can play for a lifetime. So why not keep going and follow my dreams? I don't care if people say I'm too old.

Doesn't matter. You can keep playing golf. I just want to be an inspiration to those around my age. Like keep going for your dreams. It doesn't matter the age you are. You can be 50, 40, go for your dreams.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Paige.

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