

Mizuho Americas Open

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Rose Zhang

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, I'm in the media center here at the Mizuho joined by Rose Zhang, recent winner of the Cognizant Founders Cup and defending champion this week.

Rose, let's kick things off starting to talk about last week. How was that experience and how much confidence does that give you heading into this week?

ROSE ZHANG: Certainly. Last week came a little bit unexpectedly I think. Going into the event I haven't had the best season yet and I've been learning a lot about myself, been learning a lot about my game and how I should prep.

There wasn't anything that really aligned super well when I was out there playing. I think starting out the first two rounds gave me a little bit of confidence to really kind of have a spark in playing the game like I envision it, and then to be able to really cut to the wire and play against Madelene basically almost like a match play format was super incredible and had a lot of fun.

But at the same time, I don't think I've ever really come from behind like that in any events I played in, so definitely an experience and gives me a little bit more momentum coming into this week. I'm just still kind of sinking it all in.

Q. You kind of went in a different mode the last few holes: Four birdies in the last five holes. Have you got a chance to think through what the mindset going through those holes and how you zoned in?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, there was definitely I guess a zoning in kind of moment I had on the back nine. It almost felt like acceptance, but at the same time not giving up. The golf course that I'm playing was me being very present, and having the patience to really just hit shot by shot.

As cliché as it sounds, I think that's what really happens when you're in that moment and trying to play the best you can coming from behind. So it was pretty fun to just stay in that.

Q. This is your first time defending on the LPGA Tour. How excited are you for this week to have Michelle here as tournament host and media day with Yana and her? Talk about what you're looking forward to this week.

ROSE ZHANG: It was super fun. I've been in Jersey now for almost two weeks, and I think the media day went super well. Yana, Michelle, and I had so much fun. Went to the Yankee Stadium and I think even being at Liberty we just had a good time and good chats.

I mean, it's always an honor to be able to come back, especially now I guess I'm not really a rookie anymore considering this is the first event that I played in back then.

I guess it's a little bit of a start to I guess more familiar territory. At the same time, I mean, it's so incredible coming back and also seeing Michelle and everything she's doing and all she's accomplishing. I'm really grateful to have her as not only a friend, but also someone to look up to.

Q. And one last question from me and I'll open it up. Just when you're walking around here kind of seeing the sights again, what kind of memories come back from last year?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I played a couple holes out there. I know what kind of shots I hit. There were a couple really great shots that I think about, and I'm like, wow, that was pretty good.

At the same time, I think going out there and really kind of feeling the environment a little bit again, it's all good vibes. (Smiling.)

Q. Hi. Hi, Rose.

ROSE ZHANG: Hello.

Q. I think I saw you yawn just before we got started here. How is your energy level? Can you take us through what happened after you left the media room on Sunday in terms of celebration and rest.



ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, seems like I got caught. I think yesterday was a little bit busier than I anticipated, and not golf related really. I had an outing and it was just -- I had an outing on Long Island, so even though it was close by, it was still quite hefty in terms of not golf preparation.

But I think I've just been kind of running on a little bit of adrenaline that first night, and I'm still adjusting, which I think I'm giving myself a little bit more grace in my preparation and just trying to see what I can do to best prepare myself going into this week.

And from there, I think I should be fine after a night's rest.

Q. Was that Betsy King's outing?

ROSE ZHANG: No. It was more so like a family friend gathering.

Q. Got you. Okay. So what did you do Sunday night celebrate? Anything?

ROSE ZHANG: I drove an hour and a half, or was riding an hour and a half to Long Island, and I was actually FaceTiming a bunch of my friends and catching up. I also got to face time my teammates, Rachel, Tina, Caro, Megs, and it was super fun to see them.

At the same time, a lot of my non-golf friends also FaceTimed, so it was a little fun moments to catch up. Talked a little bit about my golf, but other than that, we were catching up on each other's lives, too. I think that's basically all I did.

Called my mom obviously; Mother's Day. My whole family was at my mom's houses so it was fun to just get to see everyone.

Q. Lastly, obviously you know this course well. Does that mean you get to take today off in terms of playing or get a little bit of extra rest since you don't have to learn much?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I think it's still important to go see the golf course. I just played six holes and then I'll go back out in a little bit.

And then just basic practice. I think it's still important to get your fundamentals in. I don't feel as tired as that yawn indicated. I think it's still important just because this golf course does play difficult and you don't know, every year the conditions are different, so still takes a little bit to adjust.

Q. You mentioned you hadn't played very well most of the season. Was there anything last week that you changed in your technique to kind of find your form?

ROSE ZHANG: Just a little bit. I was working on a little bit of swing mechanics with Todd, and at the same time, I also just felt like I was not being intuitive enough with my golf game as I normally was.

Usually I'm pretty -- or back in amateur golf days I didn't have a caddie and I didn't have Olly by my side, so every decision that I made was full commitment and it was full-on intuition about how you felt about the shot.

Last week I did try a little bit more to be able to really dig deep a little bit more and handle what kind of shots I needed to hit and make a decisive point on that.

So that's all I did.

Q. What was it about the mechanics in your swing that you adjusted?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, well, it's been a while since I've been able to have eyes on my golf swing, so it was a lot of going back to what I was really good at, keeping the swing simple. I was coming really inside and that causes a lot of different shots to happen that are not exactly the best.

So I think it was more so just getting myself on plane and being able to come down with the right timing.

Q. Last question: I know that you were named a Mizuho ambassador recently. What was it like coming back here seeing your face on all the branding here?

ROSE ZHANG: I know, it's kind of crazy. I'm super honored to be able to represent Mizuho. They've been nothing but amazing with everything that they've been doing for the game of golf.

I mean, coming back and seeing my face is not something that I'm as used to, but I'm taking it all in. Super, super glad to be a part of the team.

Q. I have two questions focused and centered around the junior golf aspect. You represented the U.S. as a junior at the 2017 and to 2019 Ping Junior Solheim Cup. Do you have any good memories or advice for the junior team competing in September?

ROSE ZHANG: Oh, definitely. I think those two events were one of the best junior events that I was able to participate in.

It's a huge honor to be able to represent the U.S., and being a junior playing against Europe you have this fun format that you don't usually get to play in junior golf.

At the same time, you really also get to hang out with the pros a little bit during that week after you play. So one of my favorite memories was just being able to room with everyone and when we go out to watch the pros play, we'd get to be inside the ropes, hearing their -- getting to share memories with each other.

I played in Des Moines and I also played in Gleneagles, so with the team traveling and getting to see so many different things was one of my favorite memories.

Q. In your opinion, how has women's golf and opportunities for junior golf girls specifically changed in the last few years, and how do you think these opportunities will change the game in the future?

ROSE ZHANG: I think especially an event like this, being able to play alongside the pros is such a valuable experience for all the juniors. I remember playing in the ANA Junior Inspiration, and we got to play with the LPGA Hall of Famers on the final day, in the final round.

Even though they're not exactly -- they're seasoned veterans, and even though they're not currently competing, you still learn so much from their games and what their experiences are.

And now the juniors get to really see what a real LPGA event looks like, and they also get to play alongside the pros that are in contention and competing for -- competing in that lifestyle.

So I think this event really gives those juniors the decision on the future on what they actually want to do, whether they enjoy it or not. And no matter what, they can take a lot away from it. I know I did as a junior when I was playing alongside a couple pros and playing in major championships as an exemption.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you very much. Best of luck this week.

ROSE ZHANG: Thank you.

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