

Mizuho Americas Open

Saturday, May 18, 2024

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Sophia Popov

Quick Quotes

Q. All right, here with Sophia Popov after her third round at the Mizuho Americas Open. Three steady, solid rounds overall this week. What were you doing out there to sort of stay patient and slowly climb the leaderboard each day?

SOPHIA POPOV: To be honest, yesterday was the day that I think I found something in my game and it really clicked. It's been very tough the last I would say six to eight weeks.

I thought when I came off maternity I thought it was going to be a little bit easier and I was really struggling. Finally I think that first day I found a little bit; then yesterday I dropped some putts; then today I just played with a lot more confidence.

That's kind of just -- came from the first two days. So today was just really solid overall. I think I made one bogey, so obviously super happy.

Q. What was that thing that you found? Can you describe it?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, it's kind of tough. I think I when you're searching you try all kinds of things. You're on the range all the time. I was practicing so much and trying to figure it out and balancing obviously mom life, too.

I think sometimes you just tend to overdo it a little bit, so I think coming into the week I just told myself I want to find one thing, one thing to focus on on the golf course. That really worked for me the first day.

There was literally one swing thought that I had. It was just -- made me I think commit to all my shots a lot more than I did previously.

So I think that would just be it. And I think also it's just good to see some putts rolling in.

Q. You say coming back from maternity leave has been difficult. What has been the most difficult part of



it and how have you been managing that?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, I think the toughest part is that I love being mom. I think it's definitely my priority. Every time when I -- the last I would say six events I just didn't play good golf, and I came off a round and it's tough, and then I see her and I go, okay, it really doesn't matter. I'm so excited to see her.

I think the toughest part is going out there and still doing your job and trying to separate the two. I think previously it was a little bit tougher for me because I always have her in the back of my mind. I think that'll never change.

You're always thinking about it and you want to play really well. I want to play really well for her. I want her to see mom is doing well. I think sometimes you put pressure on yourself because of it.

This week I tried a little different. Went to the course myself the first two days, and I think it just freed me up a little bit to just do my thing. She was there when I was done so it was perfect.

Q. Can you talk me through a couple of the key moments out there today, some of the birdies you had?

SOPHIA POPOV: Yeah, so I think -- I mean, I came off to a good start. I birdied the first. Then had a good up and down my second hole, and I think that gave me a lot of confidence the rest of the day.

Made a few good putts on the front nine, but I actually think on 12 I had a terrible lie after my drive. I was like standing in the bunker and like half in, half out. I just wanted to get it somewhere on the green and ended up hitting it to eight feet and making birdie.

I make another birdie on 13.

Just kind of got me rolling again.

So I think that, plus I think the up and down on 17 honestly was probably one of my best up and downs ever. I was like, okay, if I can somehow get the first one within ten feet



that would be great. That worked well, so I think that with the up and down on 18, yeah.

Q. Last question: How important is it to stay patient on this golf course over each round? I know last year I was just talking to Jenn; she made a late climb to be in a playoff. How important is it to stay patient throughout the rounds?

SOPHIA POPOV: I think it's super important. I think sometimes out there you feel like it's very scorable and you feel like everyone is kind of going low and you feel like you have to make putts.

But I think everyone is struggling reading the greens a little bit here and there, so I think if you miss a few it's not that big of a deal. Everyone is. I think it's just important to keep that in the back of your head, that if you're making bogeys or whatever you're not the only one.

There is a lot of birdie opportunities. Like you said, if you stay patient and have a good finish out here, anything can really happen.

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