



Augusta National Women's Amateur

Friday, April 5, 2024

Gianna Clemente

Quick Quotes

Q. How did you feel like the course played today, having the opportunity to be out there and soak it all in?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: It's awesome. Definitely just taking some time and enjoying it out there with some great people. Yeah, we had a lot of fun today.

The wind's blowing a little bit. I don't remember there being any wind last year, like it was very calm last year. So it might play a little different.

Yeah, just enjoying my time out there with my dad, and we had a lot of fun.

Q. How do you think the experiences of the first two rounds and the peaks and valleys of what happened over at Champions Retreat can have an impact on getting you ready to play on a course like this?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I think it's great preparation. Champions Retreat is very difficult. Obviously everybody knows we had some tough conditions. So, yeah, I think it's great prep.

Personally I had a lot of like bad starts, like I started off very, very badly in the second round, and I had to come back from that. It was pretty difficult, but it was really good preparation for tomorrow.

Q. Obviously two different courses, right? Do you feel like you can gain or take over some of that momentum that you had from the second round?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, for sure. I know that I can make a lot of birdies. I made some birdies coming in at Champions Retreat, which was really important just confidence-wise. So I'll definitely be drawing off of that.

Q. A couple of players who have come over here have mentioned how much they view today to be a breather and a reset after the difficult conditions of yesterday. Do you agree with that? Do you feel like this is a good day to kind of reset, take a breath, and refocus?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, I think so. I fell asleep at about 8:30 last night. I was very exhausted. It's just good to have kind of like what feels like a day off a little bit. I've been traveling for almost 3 1/2 weeks now. So this is definitely a nice little, as you said, like a breather.

It's a little bit different. Obviously no other tournament out of the season has a break day in the middle, but it feels nice to just almost have a day off and just enjoy myself out here.

Q. You've been away from home for 3 1/2 weeks?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yeah, I had a tournament before this as well. We didn't go home afterwards. We just stayed up in the Carolinas area. We've been on the road for quite a while.

Q. Tomorrow on the 1st tee, what will your emotions be, and how will you just carry that forward?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I think there will be a little bit of nerves. I think that's pretty normal. Obviously it's going to look a lot different than it does today. I remember coming off of the shuttle from the range last year, not expecting the tee box to be completely lined with people.

So, yeah, that was definitely a little bit of a shocker, but I feel like it's going to be less of a shocker this year now that I've seen it before and I've played the course with the crowds and under the competition. I'll probably draw off that a little bit from last year.

Q. Does that experience last year help free you up and make you a different player this year going into the final round?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: Yes. I've said many times before that having two rounds at Augusta National prior to this is very helpful. I feel like, if I was in the lead group and this was only the second time I'd been playing, I'd be a little bit more nervous.

So it definitely helps. I don't know it completely, but I know it a lot better than I would have. Yeah, it's really helpful.

Q. What did you learn specifically today that you didn't pick up last year?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I think just knowing the greens more is really important. I kind of stepped on the greens the first time in the first practice round last year and had no idea what I was doing. I misread probably every single putt in the practice round last year.

Just knowing the greens and the undulations is really helpful.

Q. Last year you were the youngest player in the field who made the cut. This year Asterisk Talley is playing in the field. She made the cut at 15, same as you. What does that say about a player that age, and what kind of a statement does that make about how you can play well even at that young of an age?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I think it shows that the junior generation that is coming into maybe going to college this year or whatever it is -- Asterisk is obviously very young, but she's a great player. I know her pretty well. She's a great person too.

I think it shows this generation, younger generation is really good. I'm very happy to see juniors making the cut. That's really great. She's a great player. She definitely deserves it.

Q. You lead the field in putting this week. Did you see some of that translate to any of your practice rounds?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I mean, Augusta National greens are very difficult for anyone, no matter how good or bad you are at putting. It's going to be very difficult to read.

Yeah, I've been working really, really hard on my putting recently. That's really important. I've just been putting in the hours on the putting green and for good reason. I mean, Champions Retreat is no joke either. Hopefully that will translate into tomorrow.

Q. What's your favorite shot you hit today?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: There's a lot of them. I could pick from a lot of them. Probably 12, I would say. Something about I've always been really good at judging wind, but that one's still a challenge for me. It's just a really pretty shot. And I love par-3s too, so that's really good.

Q. Being in the final group this year, it's been a pretty different experience than you've had. Is there a event that you've played where you felt similar pressure?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I think being in contention or even being in the lead -- being in the lead group is very similar each time, obviously a very, very high level this time. But, yeah, just being in contention, being in any lead group is difficult.

Personally I like chasing. I think it's more pressure to be in the lead, especially in this tournament, which is a different circumstance where you have a break day. I think kind of sleeping on a lead for more than one night is a lot of pressure. Yeah, I'm looking forward to chasing tomorrow.

Q. What advantages do you think you have that maybe some of your fellow competitors don't have?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: That's a good question. I've never been asked that one before. I would say just patience. I don't have much patience off the course, but somehow I think I transfer all of my patience to on the golf course. I think just knowing, being very aware of my surroundings and knowing that I have to take it one shot at a time.

Depending on the golf course, obviously both of these golf courses being very difficult, just knowing that and being very aware of that and just having the patience to take it one shot at a time and not get too ahead of yourself.

Q. Where did you learn that?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: My dad taught me that. Both of my parents have taught me to be very patient on the golf course. They've tried to get me to be more patient off the golf course, but I would say I use most of that for on the course.

Q. What sort of impatience do you have off the golf course?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: I don't think I'm going to answer that one (laughter).

Q. A little while ago you were in Sage Valley. If you had to explain to everyone out there how special it is to be in the Augusta area this time of year playing in two events like this, how do you explain that?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: It's the best three weeks out of the entire year. Sage Valley is such a special place as well, and they treat us so well. It's such a great event. To be able to spend a week there and then have my birthday, which is right in between that, and then come here, it's really special, and it gets better every year.

Q. What specifically have you been working on with your putting? Is it something in your stroke or green reading?

GIANNA CLEMENTE: A lot of green reading. I went to see my putting coach recently, and that was the main thing that we worked on. Some basic like mechanics in my putting stroke, but mostly green reading.

I've always been an under reader, so just working on over reading some putts and getting it just right.

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