

Women's Olympic Golf Competition

Thursday, 8 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Ashleigh Buhai

Quick Quotes

Q. I'm going to ask you about something you've been asked about, but the shoe is fascinating. Where are you at in the journey?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Compared to where I was two weeks ago, still would have been tough to play. We're six weeks from breaking it.

Yeah, you think your baby toe, but it's amazing how much you need it, especially in golf.

Q. Is that pause it's mostly your lead foot?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: It's your lead foot and you have to bear the weight on that side, and that's what takes all the pressure once you strike a golf ball. That's what you want to do to get the right compression. I tried to be brave at Evian; I think it was stupid. I was advised not to by doctors and physios, but as golfers, we're stubborn and think we can fight through things.

Q. You unfortunately had to ruin your Team South Africa shoes?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I did. Luckily they sent me two pairs. It's what we have to do to be here to play. I'll do anything to get here to play. That's why I took the four weeks off that I needed to do to make sure I'd be here.

Q. When exactly did your clubs get here?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Well, they actually got here on Monday but they didn't get -- they were supposed to be delivered to me on Monday evening. There was a mess-up and I didn't get them until 11 o'clock Tuesday.

Q. 11.00am?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah. So I went to the airport. They were supposed to be delivered to the Village, they told me. I watched my air tag go around Paris until 1.30 on Tuesday



PARIS 2024



morning. I got on a 6.30 bus to get to there to try to sort it out and be like, hey, I think this person has taken my clubs home with them.

Funny, they delivered them back to the airport and then I got them at 11.00 and got to the course on Tuesday around 12.00.

Q. Where were they?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I flew direct from Philly and had nine hours in Philly, and they still didn't make it. We were delayed in Philly. They were stuck in the U.S. They didn't make the flight. So it's an adventure.

You've got to roll with the punches. I saw the holes I felt I needed to see and my caddie saw the golf course twice, so it's all good.

Q. How are you staying patient out there?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I thought I played really good today. The first hole, I made a double but I didn't make a bad swing coming out of the semi rough. Just came out a little heavy.

The second double, I had to play out of a bunker and was between wedges. I tried to hit the hard one, spun it up and yeah, it's just bad course management.

I didn't let it throw me. I just kept staying committed to what I needed to do and hit good shots coming in. Hard to hit it close, it's so firm now, especially this afternoon, it's going to keep getting firmer.

Q. Can you talk about the second shot at 18? Is the wind swirling?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: We're struggling to hole the green. I mean, we are going in -- I would have had to hit 6-iron with that flag today. I could easily obviously do but the fact is, back edge with the flag -- how close are you even going to get it.

So today, my best angle was to hit it right and hit a full



lob-wedge in and I had control on the ball. So you've just got to be smart about the angles on that hole because you're, it's gettable to hit the green but with what we have to hit in there, it's difficult to hold that green right now.

Q. Where would you say your game is compared to the summer of '22?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I think I'm pretty close. I feel like in terms of the way I'm swinging, committed, I felt I had started to turn the corner at KPMG, literally, and then yeah, broke my toe.

So I think that's why I still managed to play and get through because I'm understanding how I was trying to hit the golf ball. It's been a tough three months. I haven't had my distances where I needed to be and it's good to have that back. I had a back injury before that. I was trying to play through that, and then it's just like one thing after another.

So yeah, it's great to be able to feel like I can hit the golf ball again.

Q. Last question about the toe, I promise. What does it look like when it's dark in your hotel room at 4.30 in the morning?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: It wasn't dark, that's the problem. At least if it was dark, I had an excuse. The lights were on. It was just the way that the bed in the Airbnb was. It came over the foot of the bed. I thought I walked around but my foot still went under.

Q. Sorry to ask you that but it looks like you're almost passed it.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, we should be good. Probably another few weeks. Yesterday it looked like a little sausage but it felt good this morning.

Q. A lot of birdie opportunities. You've had nine birdies this week so far. Does that give you confidence?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, especially after the start, to make those birdies and bounce back because it could have gone pear-shaped. There are birdie chances out there but at the same time big numbers are so easy to come by. So especially for us, the rough is thick. It's very penalising. We hit it in the rough. I mean, most of the time we are just having to chop it out.

So that's where it's playing difficult and I think once that happens, just make sure that you give yourself a look at par or at worst make bogey.

Q. Is there any mindset shift that you note to change into a Tuesday or Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, tournament?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: No. It would have been nice to have an extra day I think for all of us. As girls, we felt we were one day short of what we needed; I think on this golf course, too, just to familiarise yourself a little bit more.

But yeah, the four days when you rock up are the same.

Q. For the folks back home in a cold and winter, can you explain the conditions?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Well, it's very nice and sunny. I was back in Joburg a few weeks ago, four weeks ago. But the weather has been perfect, perfect golfing weather, like 20 or 30 degrees. The wind got a little tricky today. Nice that it wasn't that it wasn't windy but that's what makes this golf course great. You need the wind.

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