

The Amundi Evian Championship

Wednesday, 10 July 2024

Evian-les-Bains, France

Evian Resort Golf Club

Rose Zhang

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, welcome inside the media center at the Amundi Evian Championship. I would be pleased to be joined by Miss Rose Zhang.

Rose, welcome back to Evian. What is it like to be back at this major championship and back in France?

ROSE ZHANG: It's incredible. I always love coming back here. Actually this place is the first time I ever traveled outside of the country. I had played the Evian Junior Cup with Alexa Pano actually.

You know, just the views, the golf course, everything just gives me so many memories, so it's really cool to just be back and have this stop as -- give myself a little French time.

Q. To look around this course and see the signage, this tournament and this team really embraced the Evian Galaxy of what it means to participate in the Kids Cup, Junior Cup, in their different junior events. What does it mean for you to kind of come up through the Evian Galaxy and be standing here today the second time as a professional?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, honestly, Evian has done so much for the game. I just remember having the best time as a junior golfer. But not only that, I came as an amateur and they took care of all the amateurs. So this week I know there is a couple amateurs in the field and they're going to have a blast, just like I did in the past.

I think Evian overall takes care of their players no matter what age, no matter their status.

As I guess a professional coming back for the second time, it still feels a little weird because I was always here as an amateur competing, but now it's kind of settled in that I'm a professional, being out here.

Q. Top 10 finish last year; tied for 9th. When you look back at the way you played last year and developed and become comfortable here at Evian, what are some of the things that excite you about this challenging test?



ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, there is a lot of grit that needs to be involved. Like any major golf course, Evian definitely presents its challenges. You never really have a flat lie on this golf course. Rough seems to be thicker than the previous years that I've been here. So that also prevents -- it causes a little bit more room for error, you get penalized a little bit more.

So that presents a little bit more of a challenge for players. But overall, I think the golf course itself, it's in great condition. It just -- you just need to place the ball in the right places, use the slopes, utilize all the little things, little quirks of the golf course, and hopefully should be good to go by the end of the week.

Q. Coming into this week, you were able to do a pit stop in London before coming here and show your stuff at Wimbledon. Just in general, what was that experience like?

ROSE ZHANG: It was super cool. I've never actually watched a professional tennis tournament, so being able to come to Wimbledon and really see the history, really watch the men and women play, it sparks an inspiration for us golfers, including me.

I just think that every sport and every athlete does what they need to do when they're on the golf course, on the court, and I really just enjoyed my time there.

Rolex was also just so great in helping us have the best hospitality and the best seats so we can just watch and enjoy the time.

But back at Stanford I also just watched the Stanford tennis team, the women's team, because I'm friends with a couple of them. It's just pretty incredible to see what they do with the tennis ball.

Q. I know it's been over a year now obviously since you got that first win; been an astronomical rise for you, none of which we were surprised about. Qualifying for your first Olympics, playing in Solheim Cup last year. Do you let yourself sit back and take in everything you've done in a year and a little bit?

ROSE ZHANG: It's a little crazy. I don't think I've really sunk it in yet just because seeing how all the players are



playing and practicing, myself included, the entire atmosphere is still just very on the go, on the go.

So being on tour, traveling week in, week out, just playing every week, it doesn't allow you to I guess take a breather.

With that being said, you still think about it here and there. I'm just so grateful to be in the position that I am. Nowhere in a million years would I have thought I would be just here sitting, doing interviews and also just playing professionally week in and week out, so it's been really cool for me.

Q. That Olympic qualification, what did that mean to you? What did that really mean to you when everything was finalized and the stress was over?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it was almost mind boggling because I watched the Olympics ever since the I was an itty bitty person. I watched all the different events, gymnastics, swimming, track and field, and now calling myself an Olympian is not something that I've ever thought about before just because it was so far into the future.

You know, I was a junior golfer and people would joke about oh, like do you want to play in the Olympics in the future. But there is only one every four years, so it's not something that you think about at all.

To represent the country, put on the red, white, and blue at the Olympics, it's going to be a pretty surreal experience.

Q. This week is challenging. You mentioned having to put the ball in the right spots. When you're practicing on flat golf courses or flatter golf courses and come to a place like this where it's a sidehill, downhill, uphill lie no matter where you hit it, how do you mentally adjust and get yourself ready to hit the approach shots on these more undulating greens?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it's really interesting. I think the most important thing is especially when you have these undulating golf courses, you really have to be creative. You have to engage in your own feel. Sometimes it's super easy to get really technical, and the people with the best technical game on a flat golf course is able to shoot lower scores.

But once you're out here, that technicality also comes into play, but at the same time, you need to hit certain shots that cause you to be a little uncomfortable or causes you to have a little bit of a different setup, et cetera, et cetera.

So really learning to be comfortable and committing will be really key for not only me, but just for everyone in

general.

Q. So you gotten an English caddie and there is a big football match tonight. Will you be watching the match and how much have you got your fingers crossed and you've got an England win and have a happy caddie in the morning?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, Olly has definitely been keeping track. He did that two weeks ago in Dow. Just had his phone out all the time just to watch the England game. I guess because Olly is obviously supporting England I'll be supporting too. I'll watch a little bit so I'll have a little bit of conversation with Olly on it.

But it's just, wow, going to be a pretty intense match, so I guess we'll see.

Q. So you've been to Wimbledon. The football has been a theme of the summer. Now you're going to the Olympics. Will you be sort of seeing much of the different sport at the Olympics, or will you stick to the Golf National and the golf?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I hope I can see a couple different sports, couple different events. I may arrive a day or two prior and just enjoy myself. The Olympics is a special time, and to soak in the experience also involves interacting with other athletes and seeing how they're performing or competing.

At the same time, golf is very important, but I think the preparation, doesn't just come a couple days prior to the event. It's just everything involved. So really learning to enjoy it is important.

Q. You used the word "inspiration" when you talked of Wimbledon. Will be you staying in the Village?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, so we'll be staying not in the Village. We're staying closer to the golf course. Team USA has a specific hotel for that. So we'll be hanging out there just because of the convenience of getting to the golf course.

Q. Couple of questions about one year later. So first, are you busier now than you were in college or is it a different busy?

ROSE ZHANG: It's definitely a different busy. When I was in college I lost a lot of sleep, I guess because I was on the team we had a lot of obligations, morning lifts, and then class, practice, and tournaments in between.

But when you're out here, it's more time on the golf course, more time traveling, and you have to also take care of your body. So it's a lot more time in the PT room or in the gym.

But I think both are -- both require a lot of I guess time, attention, and energy.

Q. And in line with that, the things that have surprised you positively and things that are more difficult than you expected in the life on tour?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I think life on tour, it's everything I expected. At the same time, when you're actually living through week in, week out, it still presents its challenges. Traveling and making sure your body is feeling good in preparation for the entire week that's to come is honestly one of the biggest challenges just because you're flying everywhere and you're never home. You never really get a true break.

You have your practice rounds and you have your afternoons off every now and then, but that's not really enough for the couple weeks that you're playing when you're out here.

So I think that has been probably the biggest challenge. Also just understanding that you're not going to play the best golf is something big, just because in amateur golf I was able to take breaks, able to work on my game for a month or two before another tournament.

Having those breaks, they make a difference; whereas when you're out here you have to play with what you have.

Q. We are in Europe. Starting to talk about the Solheim Cup. Just your memories of your first Solheim Cup last year and things you learn and kind of your vision for this year in the U.S.

ROSE ZHANG: For sure. Last year was a dream. I never expected myself to be playing in the Solheim Cup as a professional that early on. I've had experiences of playing in the Junior Solheim Cup. I played at Gleneagles in 2019 and 2017 played in Des Moines, Iowa. Those experiences itself was already -- it set up so much expectation for the week.

Last year was honestly a huge dream just to be in Spain and play alongside people that you watched on TV and even some fellow friends.

This year, you know, everyone is really competitive. We have the national pride riding on our shoulders and want to do our best. I think the biggest thing is I guess prepare ourselves, have fun with it.

I'm expecting it to be even greater just because we're in front of home crowds. That will be fun.

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