

Mizuho Americas Open

Thursday, June 1, 2023

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Rose Zhang

Quick Quotes

Q. Here with Rose Zhang coming off her first round ever as a professional at the Mizuho Americas Open. Take us through the butterflies you may have been feeling beforehand and how you felt as the round sort of went on.

ROSE ZHANG: For sure. I think it's great that I started a little bit early. That really settled the nerves a little bit, just because you wake up and then you start your prep work.

But for me, I was just going out there and trying to shoot my best score. There was a lot happening last couple days, so I really wanted to put myself in position to where I can just go out there, play some golf, and see what I can do.

Even though, you know, I had a couple putts here and there, but I felt like my game was pretty solid out there. It just helped that I played with such great playing partners, Alison and Chella are amazing.

Really felt a lot more comfortable, especially with my caddie, Gilly, out there.

Q. Would you say the round met your expectations just for a pro debut, or did you have any expectations?

ROSE ZHANG: I can't say I had any expectations because it could have either gone way south or would've been a great round. I feel like this pro debut was just great, what I expected from myself.

I'm still a competitive golfer, so trying to go out and play the best I can. Feel like I was really solid out there. Got comfortable once I got in the zone of trying to hit shot after shot.

Q. Did it occur to you that, oh, this is my first birdie as a professional on the second hole? Did that thought cross your mind at all?

ROSE ZHANG: Definitely not, because I -- you know, as a golfer you know there is so many holes after that you can



get a birdie on one hole and then triple the next.

So I'm just keeping everything into perspective, keeping things realistic, and I felt that I was pretty composed out there.

I didn't have too many nerves once I started playing. After that tee shot, I was smooth sailing.

Q. Did you think at any point during the round, oh, I'm a professional? Did it feel different? Did that reality affect you at all?

ROSE ZHANG: I would say I realized that the label of me being a professional is definitely different. I thought about it once or twice, but from the whole perspective I was just like, this is another 18 holes. I'm still competing.

I think it helps that I played LPGA events before as an amateur, so I understand what the pressure is like, what it's like to have a couple crowds out here, and playing against the best in the world.

Nothing felt too different, but it was definitely a different experience.

Q. I don't know if it was 13 or 14, was that like a half a mile, that putt or...

ROSE ZHANG: Which putt?

Q. The one that went up the hill, across the green and went in.

ROSE ZHANG: Oh, the chip? Yeah, yeah. I got 29 yards to that pin and I put myself in really, really sucky position on the tee shot.

Had to get it out with an A-wedge, but all I thought was just put myself in an area that's on land and try to get up and down from there, because going left into that water could be just pivotal for mistakes more so.

So that chip went in and I felt cheers, felt roars, and I was just really thankful for everyone to be supporting me out there.



Q. You've come to the Tour and there are a lot of people expecting you to be the next great player. How do you handle that?

ROSE ZHANG: I don't know. I just genuinely think there are people around me who treat me very normal, treat me as I am, and that keeps me grounded.

I have a very great support system around me, and that enables me to just do what I'm doing. I don't really have to think about other people's expectations. Like I said before, I think of it as a compliment that they think I'm capable of more.

But on the overall level, I think I have people that just want me to do the best I can and they push me to be better.

Q. Was this a round, when you look back -- I mean, there were a lot of putts that seemed makable. Was this a round that could have been better?

ROSE ZHANG: This was definitely a round that could have been better, and that kind of gets me excited to work on more and to develop my game even further.

I felt like I left a couple shots out there, and I think there is a lot of room for improvement. So I'm excited to keep working and keep playing to see how far I can bring my game to.

Q. Was there any common factor in the bogeys? I mean, I guess one was in a back bunker on a par-3.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah. Well, most of them were putts, just short putts that I missed.

Missed putt on 16 for birdie. It was a dead push.

Missed a putt on the prior hole, 15.

And then 14.

I was pushing my putts today a little bit. I didn't feel like I had a confident stroke, so it felt a little jabby. That's something to work on on the practice green.

Q. How would you describe the vibe out there with the gallery following you, especially on the first two? Were you expecting more or less people? How did you feel as the round was going on?

ROSE ZHANG: I was a little surprised that there were people out there. You know, it's early in the morning. It's a Thursday. I don't expect anyone to be out here and be

like, oh, go Rose.

I guess there is a lot of significance to this round for me in particular, but I felt really just loved out there. I think everyone, every single putt I made, every single shot that I hit, it got a lot of little claps, little cheers.

It was great to see some of my family, friends. Coach Walker was walking with me and Kevin, my agent, too. So I saw a bunch of faces out there that, you know, really just made me happy.

Q. And what kind of vibe, atmosphere -- you played at major championship, big events at Stanford. When you continue to play for years on the LPGA, what type do you -- does that make you nervous? What type of vibe do you like while you're playing?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I did play a lot of major championships. I have played normal LPGA events before. I feel like this is kind of what an LPGA pro's lifestyle is. They play and then they go in for a meal, go out and practice, and then et cetera, et cetera.

So I see it as something that they do on the daily, so it should be pretty casual for the most part. And I thought it was just a very smooth round. Obviously you're on the biggest stage of golf, but I felt like it was moderately casual. (Laughter.)

Moderately. Just moderately. But it was still my first event, so, you know.

Q. Obviously with this being Michelle's event, and you shared a hug before you were going into scoring, and I know you spoke about this a little bit on Tuesday, but has she given you any advice to prepare you for this moment? Obviously she did this back in '05 making her professional debut. So was there any type of advice or conversations you had going into this week?

ROSE ZHANG: I think the great thing about Michelle is she keeps everything very real, very genuine, and very authentic. So when I was going out there she was just like, do you. Do whatever it takes to just play normally and good luck.

So she's definitely been a huge role model just for young generations, for me included. She gives a lot of advice to me on how to navigate life, and especially with her being a Stanford alum. She told me a couple great stories and we just bond and share over there.

But I think that the fact that she just makes it a very normal thing, just go out there and do your thing, allows me to just

keep doing what I'm doing.

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