

Mizuho Americas Open

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Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Michelle Wie West

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, joined here in the media center at the Mizuho Americas Open by tournament host Michelle Wie West. So happy to have you here. You did something really exciting last night. We would like to show a clip of it right now to watch.

(Tonight Show clip shown.)

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congrats. That's some very exciting news. So just talk a little bit about being on the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon last night.

AYAKA FURUE: Oh, my gosh, it was so much fun. I've played with Jimmy a few times now at the 8 AM Golf Tournament and he's just such a joy to be around. He really lights up a room. I've been telling everyone I was so impressed with how well the show is run.

It was such an honor to be on it and so much fun. Got to meet Snoop Dogg and it was awesome.

Q. And you talked a little bit with Fallon about your documentary airing on Saturday. Can you talk a little bit about that process, how it came about, and how excited people should be about it?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, you know, I just never wanted to do a documentary and write a book. Something that had never crossed my mind. I felt like they were going to over-tantalize it or over-scandalize it so didn't want to do that.

Then I met the Campfire Production team and truly I was amazed by their vision for it, the people that were working there, and because of them I was like, okay, I feel comfortable enough sharing my story.

I'm really glad that I did. At the end of the day it was really cool to go through the whole process. It's probably the first time my parents sat down in an interview, which if you guys watch the whole Jimmy segment they show a clip of the documentary.

It's a documentary of my parents going through my childhood years. I didn't realize they were just roasting me throughout the whole thing, I'm a little bit worried for Saturday.

No, it was really cool. I haven't watched it yet. Really excited to watch it when it premieres with my daughter and have her see the whole thing.

Q. Looking forward to that. Really great coverage for the Mizuho Americas Open. Turning to your tournament host hat, talk a little bit about why people should be excited for this year and what's going to be going on this week.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Well, Rose won last week so really excited about that. Seems like her game is really gearing up for this week, so we love to see that.

And year two, I mean, year one was an absolute success, but we're coming back even stronger for year two. It's really cool to see how excited the players were to come back. That's just something that we all as tournament staff can feel so proud of. We've really done something so exceptional last year.

We were the first to cover all the players' hotel rooms domestically in the U.S. Over the past year it's really fun to see how many other tournaments have followed suit. That was something that I was kind of talking over and over again the first year, is we want to raise the standard of how tournaments are run.

I felt like we showed everyone the first year, and year two, you know, it's even better. It's just so amazing to see how excited the sponsors are, Mizuho is, how excited Liberty National is to have us. It just makes me as tournament host, the players as players, just feel so happy and welcome.

I'm really excited. A lot of new juniors in the field, which was really fun to see them yesterday as well. But iconic players, iconic venue, iconic format. I think it's going to be a great year.

Q. You touched a little bit on it last night, but talk a



little bit about the difference in this event having the juniors and how important that's been in crafting this tournament?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, this format is near and dear to my heart. I really started my career being one of those juniors in the field. If it wasn't for those experiences I don't know if I would be here right now.

Just really forged my career path. Made me realize that this is what I really want to do. To have the 24 top junior girls in the field is exceptionally important. It helps them to really experience life as a professional until golfer for one week. To be inside the ropes, ask as many questions as they can, but just live the life as a professional golfer.

We're going to have many girls after this week be like, this is what I want to do for my career. We're also going to have some girls be like, you know what, this is not what I want to do. And that's totally fine. That's totally okay.

So I hope they see how much work goes into putting on an event and notice that there are so many other jobs within golf as well available for women.

I just want more and more girls to be out here just to experience the tournament. These 24 junior girls I think are really going to have an amazing week learning from the best.

Q. Hi, Michelle. Congratulations.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Hi. I was going to say for sure Bethann has a question.

Q. So I wanted to talk about Rose just for a second. I'm not sure how much you got to watch the end of the Founders Cup and kind of how she pulled that off. What impresses you most about her game, and I guess more than that, the intangibles that she has?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, being a rookie on the LPGA Tour is no easy feat. You have to work twice as hard as the veterans on tour because you have to get to know 30 new golf courses. That in itself sucks a lot of energy, takes a lot of time.

Getting used to being on tour, making new friends, figuring out where the restaurants are; whereas the veteran players, that's autopilot for them. You have a group friends, you know which places to eat when you go to new cities, you know all the golf courses, so you don't really have to practice on Mondays.

For Rose she's learning everything for the first time.

Talking with her -- and also let's not forget she went back to Stanford and figured that out for the first time as well. She has a lot on her plate. She is in the spotlight.

I'm incredibly impressed with how she played. Coming down the stretch it just shows. Her nerves are like steel -- I don't know nerves of made all of steel. My brain is not working. I'm sorry.

But, yeah, I think she's so impressive. I think that she's obviously going through it right now just figuring a lot of the stuff out, but I think she has such a strong mind and such a strong confidence in herself. I've always felt it.

I was so happy to see her win.

Q. One more if I may. Nelly had this incredible streak and went to the Met Gala. You're one of the few people that have done a lot of outside-the-box things on tour. How important was that moment do you think for elevating the tour, her presence on the red carpet there, and how do you see Nelly and Rose together maybe raising the profile of the game?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, my God. I thought that Nelly going to the Met Gala was the best thing that happened. First of all she looked absolutely gorgeous. Her Oscar de la Renta R dress was drop-dead gorgeous. Hair, makeup; it was so perfect.

And my favorite part of it was the fact that Angel Reece went as well and you saw some female athletes. The fact that Angel Reece went and then killed her game like she did so well and Nelly went to the Met Gala and played so well at Founders just shows that women aren't just one dimensional.

I really appreciated that fact. Because it's just so hard for sometimes for the general public to see female athletes as anything more than female athletes. I thought it was so cool to see both of them do so at the Met Gala, look so beautiful, and then also just do so well in their own professions.

I love seeing that.

Q. We didn't think you would outdo yourself outdoing yourself, but you've done so many great, incredible things this week already for this field. How much fun is it for you to spoil some of your former counterparts and the young players out here that may have never had an LPGA experience before?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, I think the team just makes me look good. Every year they outdo themselves. The

Fireman Family are so excited to have everyone here again. You just feel their excitement. I think that sets its tone. You feel how exciting Mizuho is to be the sponsor of this tournament. They did the ferry this year and everything is branded perfectly.

I think it was just in charge of the tea gifts and little things here and there. The team just outdoes themselves every year. Just to have such an amazing golf tournament on such an iconic venue really sets the tone with the ferry, hotel, being in New York City.

And I just think that because I was a player so soon before, I think there were so many things that I was -- I would always complain to the LPGA about this, player dining, this and that. It's just fun to have some -- be able to change some of that.

I want the players to come to this event and raise their own standards and be like, this is what we deserve week in and week out. This is the type of player dining. It's like little things that here and there. These are the gifts I want to receive and these are the accommodations I want to see. These are things I want players to almost start taking for granted.

I want them to go to the next tournament and if they don't see that they need to say something about it. I'm really glad for this tournament we're really raising the standard.

It's fun to see the other tournaments really follow.

Q. For you, you've always been kind of a game changer in the space throughout your playing career and now after it. What has it meant to you to continue to be a catalyst for change in women's golf and women's athletes period?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I'm honored to be a part of the game still. You know, to be a tournament host, to come to an LPGA event, you know, every year, honestly it's such a great honor to be around the players still and be so involved.

Kind of like I said before, there is a lot of things that I wanted to work on on tour. Being a player you just don't have the time to do so. It's really fun to now kind of have the time and brain space to really think of those things and think about how in my own way I can help the tour.

I know that so many women before me did the same for us. The last thing I wanted to was to retire from golf and just be like, okay, this is your problem now. This is your responsibility. Like I still find it my responsibility, my generation's responsibility to make it better for the next

one.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time sure Michelle. Really appreciate it.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Thank you.

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