

Mizuho Americas Open

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West Caldwell, New Jersey, USA

Mountain Ridge Country Club

Amari Avery

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, pleased to be joined by Amari Avery here if the Mizuho Americas Open. First of all talk about how excited you are this week to tee it up as a sponsor's exemption.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, really excited. Obviously wasn't planning on being in New Jersey this week. I was planning on being in Vegas at the Epson Tour Championship. So no, I'm super excited to be here. Actually I didn't really look at the schedule for the LPGA obviously so I didn't know where we were playing; just knew it wasn't at Liberty. I thought to myself I think we might be at course I've played before on the LPGA. I just checked it out and I was like oh, cool I'm going back to a familiar place, which is really cool.

Q. Speaking of Epson, two back-to-back finishes for you. First career victory?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah.

Q. How much has the Epson Tour helped you prepare for a moment like this getting to tee it up here and how much did that win mean to you, too?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I think playing on the Epson Tour has been tremendously helpful for me. Going into it in 2024 playing that half year I thought I would be in and out because I believe in myself and I know where I'm at.

At the same time, like I just think golf and professional golf is getting more and more competitive every year, so there is constantly competition. You have to be on top of your game at all times.

Being on the Epson Tour has been really helpful for me in just developing my game further and getting ready to be out here. And of course getting my first win last week, two weeks ago, I think I always knew it was going to happen in due time. Wish it happened sooner, but I'm excited it happened, and ready for the rest of the year.

Q. How do you reset a little bit from -- not maybe



reset, but you had two great finishes, fly across the country, how do you mentally prepare yourself to throw yourself into the next step up from the Epson Tour?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, yeah, I think it's kind of the mindset of like this is our job. Like I don't really care where I go. I know that I have to hit the ball straight and make some putts.

That's the mindset this week. I played here before so I can lean on a little bit of past experience. I know we're laying on the LPGA so it's going to be -- not that it's any tougher; I think the competition is a little bit tougher.

Either way like I said you got hit the ball straight and make some putts.

Q. Been a few years, but what do you remember about playing here in '21?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, first LPGA event I believe as an am, so I remember how special it was for me and having my dad on the bag. Unfortunately he's not here this week, but he's here in spirit and cheering me on back home.

I remember how tough it was and how tough the greens were. It was a bit longer for me back then. I was only 17 at the time, so I think I've gained a couple yards. I think that helps me out a ton.

Q. Getting to play, or just finished playing it today, what have you made of the course? Obviously tougher conditions with the wind this afternoon. What have you made of the course?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, it's great. Great setup. Longer-ish, so it's good for me with my ball striking, how far I hit it, so really excited for that. If the greens stay firm I think it'll you be a nice test for everybody.

Q. Pretty illustrious junior and amateur golf career. What do events like this were the AJGA players are paired with LPGA Tour players? What do you think it teaches them and does for the game in general?



AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I think it's awesome. Like I've said, I played here when I was just a teenager, so I can't even imagine like what's that like playing with the pros as well, which I guess we kind of have that same experience.

But I think it's really cool. Obviously we don't see very many tournaments like that. I think it's a great learning process for them and I guess for us. I'm actually really excited to see some of the ams play. I can only watch from afar now playing professionally, but like I said there is a lot of up-and-coming talent and I think they'll be great competitors.

Q. I remember young Amari, five years ago. I was young, too. How has she changed? How have you changed in the five years since you made your LPGA debut here?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I think I've just grown up so much. I'm still only 22 so I feel very young and also very experienced as well. I think when played that tournament when I was 17, like I thought I was going to be on Tour at 18.

Like I thought I was going to turn professional and do all these crazy things. Not that I haven't done great things, but I wasn't planning on going to college and now looking back I'm so glad I went to college and so glad I got the experience of playing as an am. Yeah, I've grown a bunch and just glad I took the route that I took.

Q. For you, I know that was such a huge win. What were some of the emotions that came with picking up that first professional victory?

AMARI AVERY: I don't know if I processed them too much. I played a U.S. Open qualifier the next day and that was 36 holes, so I was just like, all right, some more golf.

No, I mean, I'm really excited. Like I said, I always knew I was capable of it. Like I said, I wish it happened sooner, but at the at the same time, I just trusted the process and knew it was going to happen for me.

So I think it was more just like a relief and now I can kind of go do everything that I want to do.

Q. Almost won again the next week.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah.

Q. What does it say about the state of your game that you've played so consistently over those couple weeks?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, it feels great. The west coast stretch on the Epson Tour is one of my favorite stretches of the year, and I knew that if I keep doing what I'm doing I'm going to have probably some good finishes.

Obviously starting well in Beaumont was good for me. Scottsdale, I just moved there. I live five minutes from TPC, so I knew I was just going to be on a high anyway and because I get to stay at home.

Yeah, excited that I played so well. I gave myself a chance and had a four-stroke lead going into the back nine. I felt great about the game. Feel like there is a lot of good things happening, and glad I get the opportunity to play here this week.

Q. What advice would you give 17-year-old Amari and the what advice are you going to give to those AJGA girls that might be looking up to you this week?

AMARI AVERY: I don't know if I can give them any advice. I think they know what they're doing. They're pretty good. They're doing a lot of great things. Honestly for me I would just say stick to the process. Trust in your team and what you're doing. Everything kind of happens in due time.

Q. How do these opportunities on the LPGA validate the dream that you have to be out here and motivate you when you go back to the Epson Tour to work as hard as you can to get out here next year?

AMARI AVERY: Oh, yeah, it's great for me. When I got the call that I was given a spot I was honestly really excited. I got it on Thursday so I wasn't really sure if I wanted to come or not. I asked Kayla, can I just wait until I see how I play on Friday to see if it's worth it coming out here for me, because I want to put a lot of my focus into the Epson Tour this year and making sure I get out here and have a spot.

So I think it's great so early in the season that I get to play out here on the LPGA and just kind of get a taste of it. Hopefully all goes well for the rest of the year and I'll be back next year.

Q. One last question from me. Your fellow Nike athlete, Michelle Wie West is the tournament host here.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah.

Q. She does a great job of giving back to the game, of representing her community. Is there any lessons or do you look up to her? If so, why? And is she a role model for you?

AMARI AVERY: Michelle has always been a role model for me ever since I started playing golf. I knew I wanted to be with Nike because of her and Tiger. I don't know if I ever told her that. I might have. Yeah, I wanted to be with Nike because of her and Tiger.

Obviously all the things she did as a young pro and a young amateur, I think I've just always looked up to her golf-wise, and now that she's I guess sort of stepped away but is involving herself in just women's golf in general and women's sports in general, I really look up to that because I think she's really taken it upon herself because she knows she has a presence and that people would want to listen to her and see she actually wants to help.

I definitely look up to that. I think that's really admirable, and I think she's just a great person overall.

Q. Congratulations. Well played.

AMARI AVERY: Thank you.

Q. I have a couple, if I may. I want to read something that Sean Foley wrote an Instagram and then you can explain to me what he's referring to here.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah.

Q. "This win is proof that when a player puts themselves first and takes a deep look at what it means to be a professional, anything is possible." What's he talking about?

AMARI AVERY: (Laughter.) I don't know exactly what he's alluding to. I think there has been some changes in my life recently and I have -- in turn kind of have focused a little bit more on myself and I've been given that opportunity.

So he's talking about whatever. He's just Sean. But, yeah, I think I've always put myself first and now especially I get to do that. So, yeah.

Q. What has he meant to you over the years? He's been in your life for a really long time.

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I mean, Sean, it's hard to put into words what he means to me and really my family. He's done a lot for me and my sister. He's given us so much of his time, and it's precious time. In my opinion he's the best golf coach and just the best person to have in your life as a golfer, athlete.

So, yeah, he knows that I appreciate him. I don't think he knows to quite the degree how much I appreciate him, but he's just very influential in my life on and off the golf

course. When I get a chance to talk to him or see him or just be in his presence I'm appreciative and glad he's in my life.

Q. You talked a lot about the need to trust the process so to speak. Was there a point in the last couple years where you were reaching peak impatience?

AMARI AVERY: I don't know about impatience. I think maybe a little bit. I would hate to put it that way. If I had to, I would say it was impatience.

Like I said, I believe in my capabilities and I believe that I can be the best in the world. It's definitely been tough like leaving college early and taking this long to get out on the LPGA Tour.

Like at the end of the day having someone like Sean in my life and other people telling me to trust the process and stay within yourself, I think like I said everything happens in due time.

Obviously I want to use these last two years and hopefully the rest of this year goes well for me. Use all that you have all that this get on the LPGA Tour and be ready so that way I don't feel like such a rookie next year.

So you never know, but I think this only helps me for sure.

Q. Finally, when you hear someone note that a Black player has never won on the LPGA, what goes through your mind?

AMARI AVERY: Yeah, I mean, I've been -- this has been in my head and in my ear since I was probably 11, 12 years old. Like it's something that is obviously very significant to minority golf, Black golf. It's honestly just shocking to think about.

But at the same time, I think that's a lot to put on someone's shoulders for sure. I've been hearing it my entire life. I know a bunch of Black golfers, men and women, especially women, and they've all felt the extra weight on their shoulders.

I think maybe that could be contributing to why we haven't seen a Black golfer win on Tour before. So I think with my win last week and just with everything that's been going on in Black golf, women's golf, we're on the right path. Hope to see one soon. Hopefully it's me, but of course I'm always rooting for my counterparts as well.

Q. Do you visualize it?

AMARI AVERY: Oh, 100%. I never thought in my lifetime



I would not ever see a Black golfer win and have obviously seen myself -- I've dreamt myself winning on Tour and winning majors since I was three, four years old. So I think it's definitely going to happen.

I think it'll definitely happen for me if I keep sticking to what I do, and hopefully there is multiple Black winners on Tour.

Q. Thank you so much, I appreciate it.

AMARI AVERY: Of course.

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