

Mizuho Americas Open

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West Caldwell, New Jersey, USA

Mountain Ridge Country Club

Vidhi Lakhawala

Rayee Feng

Press Conference



little nuances and etiquette that the Tour professionals knew.

So I felt a little bit out of place, but it was really good and I thought that I learned a lot, and it helped me prepare for this as well.

Like I don't want to be in the way of the professionals. It's a really like great opportunity for us to be here and it's a privilege, so I think it's just really great that we have this; and then we can kind of learn how to navigate the tournaments and inside the ropes and things like that.

Q. Then you both are from New Jersey. How is it to have a hometown feel and are you going to have a lot of family and friends out here supporting you this week?

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, it feels great to be able to play such a big event in New Jersey. Now I don't get to play a lot of tournaments in New Jersey, so not only is it special to play an event here, but also to play such a huge global event where we're playing alongside the pros.

Yeah, I do have quite a bit of family and friends coming and just cheering and supporting for me. It'll be their first time kind of watching a professional event, so they'll also be able to get a good idea of what I aspire to do in the future.

RAYEE FENG: Yeah, I'm really excited for this. Again, I also have family and friends coming out here, so I'm really excited for them to experience a golf tournament, watching a golf tournament.

And I was watching the first -- the inaugural Mizuho Americas Open at Liberty and I was thinking to myself, wow, this would be so cool. So actually being here means so much to me. I'm very excited for this tournament.

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, to add to that, I was there too. I feel like it's a full circle moment for both of us. I remember my dad telling me like in a couple years like I want to see you be playing in this field.

At the time I didn't know if it was going to be possible but

THE MODERATOR: All right, joining us ahead of the Mizuho Americas Open is Vidhi Lakhawala and Rayee Feng. You guys are out here playing on behalf of the AJGA this week alongside some of your LPGA Tour pros. Talk about what it means to you to be a part of this event and get to have this experience.

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, I think it's really special and a really cool opportunity to be able to play alongside the LPGA players this week. It's really cool to see inside the ropes all the different things they do behind the scenes.

I mean, when I'm watching on TV I watch them play, but in this event I'm able to see them practice and prepare for the event, which I think has been really cool and a great learning experience.

RAYEE FENG: Yeah, like Vidhi said, I'm super grateful and thankful to everyone involved for making this event happen, but it's just such a great experience learning from all the professionals. You know, Vidhi already said this, but learning how they practice has been huge. Specifically for a practice round, what kind of shots they're hitting, putting, chipping. It has been very helpful.

Q. You both played in a professional event before. Talk about what your takeaways are after events like that, whether like you said, it's learning more about practice or if it's just getting to test your game against the best in the world?

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, I would say that I learned a lot about myself and just being in those situations with LPGA pros, and just knowing that I'm up there and I'm really good and just having that confidence and believing in myself that I can compete with the best in the world, and I can do well in those conditions.

RAYEE FENG: So I feel like I played in the U.S. Open and that was like a really big field. I hadn't really played any professional events before that, so I really learned like the



just through a lot of hard work I'm happy to be sitting here right now.

Q. Can you both talk about the LPGA and AJGA mentorship program. I know you both have been paired with an LPGA mentor this week. Can you share any conversations or experiences you've had this week?

RAYEE FENG: Yeah, so my LPGA mentor is Alexa Pano. I was super, super excited to meet her you because when I was younger we were at -- my friend and I were at Drive, Chip & Putt and we saw her and took a picture with her, so it's been amazing to meet someone you looked up to.

And we got lunch together and I asked her a lot about the transition between junior golf, Epson Tour, and LPGA Tour. Like I mentioned earlier, the small etiquette stuff, she was like, yeah, on your first -- during your first year you're not going to know anything and you're going to feel stupid, but it happens to everyone.

So the reassurance was great. It was really nice being able to talk to someone who went through it, junior golf AJGA, to the professional tours, and I am really thankful for the opportunity.

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, my mentor is Gurleen Kaur. I had met her before I was paired, but I think I'm really grateful to be paired with her because we have the same background and we're both Indian origin players.

So it was really cool to see how he was able to navigate through the junior and then college ranks and then be one of the best in the world playing on the LPGA.

And we talked a lot about how she prepares for events and just how she stays mentally ready for all the events and all of the different conditions.

Q. Can you both share the coolest part of this event? I know each player in the field receives a courtesy car this week. I know you guys were showered with a ton of gifts. Talk about how exciting has that part been?

RAYEE FENG: Yeah, so I -- I mean, I love like receiving all these really nice gifts from the sponsors. I'm super thankful.

But I think a big part of what makes this tournament special is like being able to I guess practice with professionals and just having them be right there. It's a little nerve-wracking, but it's really cool.

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, I agree with that. Like I said,

earlier it's just when we watch it on TV, we watch them play on golf course, hit these greats shots, and it's really cool to see the behind the scenes and see what they're doing on the putting green, what drills they're doing, how are they practicing on the range, all the different techniques that they're trying out.

So it's been really cool to see that and to also learn from that and take those little nuances and implement them in my game as well.

Q. Seeing Yana Wilson make her second professional debut or start here after winning the inaugural Mizuho Americas Open, what would you want to say to yourself if you were given the opportunity to play here as a pro in the future?

RAYEE FENG: That's a pretty hard question. I mean, seeing her, it's such a big inspiration. We're all here having fun and trying to win, play our best.

So her being able to win this tournament and then turn professional and play again in the same tournament, it's just so cool. I mean, I really look up to her, so I kind of want to see myself in that position. Hopefully.

But, yeah.

VIDHI LAKHAWALA: Yeah, it's really inspiring to see that a few years ago she won the junior side of the Mizuho and now a couple years later she turns pro, does really well on the Epson Tour, and now playing on the LPGA Tour.

It's just really inspiring to see and something that I strive to do, like what she did, yeah.

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