

U.S. Girls' Junior Championship

Saturday, July 17, 2021

Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA

Columbia Country Club

Rose Zhang

Press Conference



Q. Can you tell us about the shot coming out of the break? Was that what was going through your mind, I need to hit the flagstick?

ROSE ZHANG: I mean, we were in a really long delay, and I didn't warm up prior to coming out. I just went ahead and hit my first drive. It definitely was off the heel. Overall it was just -- I was trying to stay in the moment and not get ahead of myself, even with a large lead, it's really easy in match play to trail behind with less momentum on your side.

After I hit that shot, I just stayed composed. I had 138 left to the pin, and I knew I was having a bit of adrenaline going and I was having a flier lie.

I clubbed down to a pitching wedge, and I mean, luck was on my side and it hit the pin. I think it would have gone way over if it didn't, so it was just an amazing moment, and making that putt was extra special.

Q. Can you describe a little bit about competing against Bailey. Obviously she was the hometown favorite. Just your thoughts about going up against her.

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, Bailey is an amazing player and person. I got to see her a little bit in junior events. We never really talked a lot, but in this championship match she played really well.

It's just overall, just playing the match with her, it was an incredible experience. I'm really extremely grateful for her competitive nature and her great playing.

Q. How comfortable are you now playing in the Maryland area after winning the Women's Amateur last year and winning this one here right down the road?

ROSE ZHANG: I didn't really think about it, just Woodmont

being right down the street. But I guess Maryland will always hold a special place in my heart. It's really amazing.

There's so many great crowds, and although they were rooting for the hometown girl, it was definitely such a great experience.

Q. What are some of the similarities and differences for you in winning last year, kind of bursting on the scene and winning the Women's Amateur, your first USGA championship, and now a year later where you are in your career and what you hope to do? Maybe some similarities between this year and last year.

ROSE ZHANG: The difference was last year it was a COVID year. Now things are slowly getting back to where it was normally, but last year it was definitely different since there's no spectators, and the social distancing aspect.

Just seeing crowds out here this week, it was a really special kind of week where we actually got to see people cheering for us and cheering us on.

I think my game has overall matured. I've got to be a little more experienced in terms of the social media and the speaking department. I've gotten a little bit used to that. It really definitely helps ease up any pressure after tournament rounds.

I think overall my game is headed in a really good direction. I'm really proud of the commitment and work that I put in, just over the past year, and my body is getting better. I'm learning to take care of my body more since last year I was injured, and you know, this year is just a progression of its own.

I'm just looking forward to kind of minimizing more mistakes that I see on the course or in my personal life. I'll just continue to work hard.

Q. How does it feel being the No. 1 seed, the No. 1 amateur? There's a lot of pressure people expect you to win and not a lot of people -- no one has that kind of pressure. How do you deal with that kind of pressure?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, I mean, coming into the week everyone just expects you to play well. I mean, it feels



really great that they have really high standards for me, but I think you really have to know that golf is a difficult sport. Everyone is playing the same grounds, playing from the same tee, and you're playing in the same conditions.

I think it's really flattering.

I don't really have too much pressure because the people around me and the people that I surround myself with always strive for my improvement and progress, so when I do do something that's not up to par with their standards, it definitely keeps me in the moment, keeps me on my toes, so I really appreciate that.

Q. Earlier this week Bailey had said whenever Rose shows up we're all playing for second. You have a couple majors, another USGA championship coming up. What does this do for your confidence in those events coming up?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it's amazing. I mean, this is the first event of my long stretch, and to be able to win on such a grueling week, it's truly amazing.

USGA events in general are just -- you really need your "A" game in terms of your patience, your grit and your golf game. Just being able to pull through on such a long week is something really special, and I think I feel very accomplished in what I did this week.

Q. You've won some trophies; how does that gold medal feel? You don't get a gold medal for just any kind of a win.

ROSE ZHANG: Yes, I mean, it feels amazing. Gold medal speaks for itself. It's just being able to have this opportunity and be in this position. I think it's something I'll remember for a lifetime.

Q. Seems like you had a pretty close match going on early on and then I think a turning point might have been late in the back nine in that morning round, you birdied 16, you birdied 18, and you go quickly from 1-up to 4-up. What did that kind of do going into lunch and for your confidence in the afternoon?

ROSE ZHANG: Yeah, it just gave me a bit of a reassurance, and in the afternoon match I can stay aggressive and keep trying to play my own game because I know my game is there from the morning match.

Even if I slipped up on one, it really just gave me a clear reminder that this is still match play and I need to keep staying in the zone, and from then on, I just kept playing -- kept doing what I needed to do.

In the morning it was very tight. Bailey was making almost every putt she looked at, and I just had to stay patient and keep up with her. That's what you have to do with your opponent, and I think that I did that pretty well.

Q. You hit the shots, you made all the putts, but how much credit do you give to your caddie who's a club champion here?

ROSE ZHANG: A great deal. I think caddies are underappreciated, and they're not really considered a big part of the golf game, but they are. And Doug this week, he really did amazing just letting me commit to what I needed to do after every shot, and since he knew the greens as well as any club champion would, he read the lines perfectly.

Everything just clicked, and he's just an amazing person and caddie. So I really appreciate all that he did this weekend. Without him I definitely wouldn't have gotten this championship.

Q. And you get to choose your lunch at USGA finals. What did you go with today?

ROSE ZHANG: I did. I went with honey glazed salmon and broccoli. It was the same chef that cooked for me at Woodmont, so it was an extra special meal.

Q. Are you going to take him to the Women's Am?

ROSE ZHANG: Maybe, yes.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports