

# U.S. Girls' Junior Championship

Saturday, July 22, 2023

Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA

USAF Academy Eisenhower Golf Club

## Kiara Romero

### Press Conference

**Q. An absolute grind of a day. Won it on the very last hole. How does it feel to be a USGA champion?**

KIARA ROMERO: I can't really think about that right now. I'm just so excited and super tired. I mean, it's been a long day and I'm really glad I got it done. But I don't think it's really sunk in yet.

**Q. Talk about the putt. I guess it was about seven feet. You've been patient all week in getting over your putts, you really go through a routine. Was it a little longer on this one and what was going through your mind, knowing if you make it the match is over?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, I took a little extra time because these past few days my right-to-left putts haven't been great, I've been pulling them a little bit. So when I went over that putt and I knew it was right-to-left I knew I needed to take my time and really focus on it, if I wanted to make it.

I didn't really think about how it was going to be determining the match and stuff, I just tried to focus on putting a good stroke on it.

**Q. 18th green, that chip runs long, you have a little bit of work to do. What's going through your head before that putt?**

KIARA ROMERO: I was just really focusing on like the actual putt itself. Like reading it and just putting a good stroke and trying to make it. But I didn't really think about how, if I made it I won or if I missed we would have to go to extras or something.

**Q. You said all along that you're very much into the process and didn't want to get ahead of yourself and that sort of thing, but at the end of the day, how do you rank this among your accomplishments in golf?**

KIARA ROMERO: This is definitely one of my biggest accomplishments. I've come very close to winning a lot of tournaments, a lot of top 5s and a lot of top 10s. So I have



been getting a little frustrated that I keep coming a little short. But I just kept grinding and kept going with what I was doing and I'm glad to get it done this time.

**Q. Going into the week, as I said, you do focus on just like one match at a time, that sort of thing. But did you think, I'm up for winning this event? Did you ever, did that ever enter your mind going into the week?**

KIARA ROMERO: It definitely did cross my mind a few times. But every time it did I just tried to push the thought away and just try to focus on the shot that's right in front of me.

**Q. What was your yardage, what club did you hit?**

KIARA ROMERO: On 18?

**Q. On 18. And how surprised were you when it went over the green?**

KIARA ROMERO: It was 155, uphill, so it played like 160. I took a 9-iron, which is my 135 club back at home. So here that's like 150. So when I hit it I knew it would be a little long but I didn't think it would be that long.

**Q. Did it look good in the air?**

KIARA ROMERO: It did. I thought I hit it a little -- I didn't really catch it that clean, so I thought it would be short. But I guess the adrenaline was pumping pretty hard.

**Q. Not a ton of birdies made out there today. Seemed like patience was going to be a big factor, just kind of grinding it through. Did you sense that? It seems like that's the type of player you are. You're very patient with your self and don't get too excited.**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, with golf you never know what's going to happen. So you just have to stay calm and focus really hard. I knew this 36-hole match was going to be a grind, so I just really tried to focus on hitting the fairway, hitting the green and then getting close to making birdie there. And if it didn't, I had to just stay patient.

**Q. First nine holes of the day you hit a few bunkers, were in the rough a little bit. Was there a point when you were down in that match, did you do anything to**



**reset, clear your mind, just forget about those things?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, I kept -- I was getting a little frustrated, but I had to keep reminding myself that it's just golf, at the end of the day. This is really not that big of a deal. That really helped me just calm down and just focus.

**Q. What kind of momentum does this give you just weeks before you head to Eugene?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, I'm super excited to go off into college and this has definitely given me a lot of confidence. I know I can compete against some of the best girls in golf.

**Q. You had a local caddie, a guy who's been at this course for 50 years, knows this place maybe better than anybody else. How much of a factor was he in your run this week, just putting you in positions of knowing where to hit putts and read putts and manage your way around the golf course?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, for sure. The biggest thing about this golf course is knowing the greens. And he definitely knew them very well. So he helped me so much on putting and especially like placing your approach shots in the right spot. You never want to go above the hole on certain holes and sometimes when you do, you have to really tap it and it will still go like 10 feet. So he helped me avoid those situations and I'm really grateful for him.

**Q. Coming into this week, how have you been playing?**

KIARA ROMERO: My approach shots and my ball striking was really good this week. It was rare to miss the green. But I think my putting, I was struggling with putting a little bit. The first day at stroke play I made pretty much everything within eight feet. Then the next day I missed like three or four, 2- or 3-footers. So I was struggling a little bit, but I knew I was, I could get it back and I knew it was just a lot of mental, so I just tried to push away the bad thoughts and just stay confident.

**Q. What's next for you?**

KIARA ROMERO: The Women's Am.

**Q. So you're not playing the Girls Junior PGA?**

KIARA ROMERO: I don't think so. Not anymore, no.

**Q. You accelerated, right, to get to the class of 2023?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, I completed high school in three years on-line. I'm only 17 and I turn 18 in March.

**Q. Would you consider playing this tournament again next year, being only 17?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yeah, I might.

**Q. Did you know your opponent? I mean, like casually, very well or from tournaments or how well did you know each other?**

KIARA ROMERO: We played a few tournaments together. Last year we went head-to-head in the Junior PGA. We both got, she got second, I got third. So I know she was a great player and I knew it would take a lot to win today.

**Q. Your mom is from the Philippines, correct?**

KIARA ROMERO: Yes.

**Q. When was the last time you won a tournament?**

KIARA ROMERO: 2020. Polo Junior. The AJGA Polo. It was also -- it's match play. So I had a lot of confidence with match play this week.

**Q. What was your record in Wyndham Cup last week? Do you remember?**

KIARA ROMERO: 3-1. Wait. Did we play four matches? Yeah.

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