

U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur Championship

Thursday, September 3, 2026

West Orange, New Jersey, USA

Montclair Golf Club

Ivy Shepherd

Press Conference

Q. Ivy, congratulations on winning the U.S. Women's Am this year.

IVY SHEPHERD: Thank you.

Q. How are you feeling right now?

IVY SHEPHERD: Incredible. Feels pretty good to finally get through the week. Yeah, it's pretty surreal. I don't quite know exactly what I'm feeling, but I'm very excited and very grateful.

Q. Talk about playing with your dad in the crowd today, in the gallery. What was that like?

IVY SHEPHERD: Again, it was a blessing. Like I said in my speech out there, I don't know how many more golf courses he's going to get to walk with me and watch. I've come in second a lot, I've come runner-up, and he's never really seen me win-win, so it was pretty special. At one point, you know, he's walking around and I'm like, can someone please get this guy a buggy so he can get up and down the hills. Because I just want him to watch. It was very special.

It made me honestly focus on that a little more than the golf sometimes.

Q. It was obviously a really long week. Do you feel like you learned something about yourself when it kind of comes to taking on this many days of competitive golf?

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, I mean, I think I proved myself wrong in a lot of ways. I think I've always told myself I was somebody who was always pretty good but never quite good enough or couldn't really handle these big moments.

So honestly I've had a mental shift in the last year and a half of just like trying to learn how to care about myself and find what my true identity is; not as a golfer, but as a person and child of God and all that good stuff.



So I think I really proved myself a little wrong or maybe vouched for the glory of God. I don't quite know yet.

Q. Flipping over to the match, what did it take to get it done? Obviously we all saw the drive on 13.

Absolutely insane. Talk about your match. How did you get it done?

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, again, same game plan I have had since the first tee shot this week, which was after our first practice round hole I was like, man, these greens are something else. I just told myself, like if I can just find a way to make pars or continue to play for the smart targets and never quite be too aggressive or even aggressive in general, like the golf is going to come and the scores will come to you or the match will come to you.

That was kind of my game plan. I had it from the first tee shot to the final putt, was just how do I almost play it safe and let the aggression like -- let the golf course beat somebody else up because I'm making them have to make putts.

So...

Q. Can you just talk a little bit about this victory gets you a lot of things, including this beautiful trophy. I heard your quip about the longest U.S. Women's Open qualifier. Now in the U.S. Women's Open, Women's Amateurs, obviously the next ten of these.

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah.

Q. Can you just talk about what this victory does for you in terms of returning you back to a level that you were at, you know, five, six years ago?

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, it's pretty surreal. I didn't realize Women's Am was at Pinehurst next year. That was like my favorite place in like the history of the world. I have really good memories there. I played the North South there a ton of times in amateur golf and made it to the semis and quarters.

I've had a lot of good golf there, so it's somewhere I feel very comfortable and I love it there. So that's really exciting. I didn't realize that was one of the events, so

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that's so coll.

And getting to play this for another ten years and not have to go to another qualifier is great.

And then obviously the U.S. Women's Open is a true blessing. I don't know, again, been trying to do it my whole life. Finally being able to I guess do it after however many matches I just played is hilarious to me, but I got it done and it's fun, so...

Q. Speaking of the matches you just played, not sure if you realize this, but since you joined up forces with Nicholas for the round of 32, you never trailed any hole.

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah.

Q. Your entire way. You trailed 11 holes in the round of 64.

IVY SHEPHERD: I did.

Q. And then since taking Nicholas on the bag, can you just a little bit about the partnership that you guys seemed to have formed in a very short time?

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, he's, I mean, the absolute best. We've talked about it. I think after our first day on the bag, winning those two matches two days ago now, we were like, this was a totally not an accident kind of running into him.

I was kind of joking. I said it to a little kid earlier. Like I was walking through the clubhouse and he was saying, I want to be a caddie when I grow up or something like that. I was like, you want to caddie for me? He was kind of like, Uhh.

So I was kind of making a joke, and then I saw Nick in the pro shop and he'd said that he was out caddieing and I was like, hey, if I make match play you want to caddie? And he goes, yeah, sure. You know where to find me. He would send me little things as I was walking by throughout stroke play, and I was like, oh, this is a good dude. I said, let's do it.

Yeah, again, I was talking to him on the golf cart when we were going to get pictures. I was like, I don't think since you got on my bag I've trailed, which is pretty crazy.

He's the best and I think it was a blessing to get to meet him.

Q. I know when we talked the other day you said you

had just started your business. Can you give a little bit more details about the career shift for you and what the business entails and sort of how it's going so far?

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, sure. So it's really just like a performance coaching or professional development, however somebody wants to look at it. So, yeah, I have a few clients right now. I guess a lot of it is especially females when they turn pro, there is a lot of difficulties in terms of financial stuff or I don't know where to get new wedges or gloves or balls. So trying to help them out. Or what to play or not to play. Just trying to schedule them and truly be a mentor.

Sounds a little conceited coming from somebody who never did it, but I think I've definitely been blessed with a pretty level head on my shoulders and understanding a lot of things.

So being able to share wisdom that way is kind of what I'm doing. So building schedules and practice plans and helping them I guess get to -- develop to whatever their best is is kind of I guess the job description.

Q. You recently moved to Atlanta to do that.

IVY SHEPHERD: Yeah, moved back to Georgia from Indiana.

Q. Can you just talk a little bit -- to the extent you're comfortable -- about the gap in competitive golf that you took and the challenges you overcame and the whole journey since we last saw you at the 2022 ANWA up until now?

IVY SHEPHERD: You know, when you talk about all parties involved, I know everything happened for a reason. The Lord gives us things in crazy ways.

But, yeah, so kind of in that spring before that ANWA in 2022, went through some tough stuff. Didn't get to play my last semester at Clemson and was really hurt by it and kind of and got the yips and then fell out of love the game.

It was a lot of pain. I just felt like I could never get over the hump. It was beating me down more than it was building me up. Like I think a lot of people probably struggle with this game. It's a very humbling sport.

So yeah, I was pretty low. And then before all that happened I was signed to go to Kentucky for my grad year which was awesome.

Those two coaches there, Golda and Will, poured into me like nobody else. Trying not to get emotional about it. Like

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they were -- yeah.

So when I first committed to go there, signed, I was playing really good golf. Just got ANWA, finished second in the All-American in Arizona in September. Played some of my best golf ever. And then everything kind of happened and hit the ground, make stupid choices and you feel like stuff happened that wasn't quite deserving for making what I thought was good choices for me.

Again, I'm actually grateful looking back at that time because it made me into this better person. Yeah, they poured into me like nobody else. Hitting two fairways a round is not very fun to watch. They kept believing in me. Will, assistant coach to this day says he tells all the girls, oh, my gosh, Ivy can make a par from anywhere. Like in the trees.

That was kind of that story. Just decided I needed a break from the competitiveness, so I took a break and I coached. That was extremely rewarding, getting to pour back into the girls. You start hearing from the other side, man, I was freaking nuts. Like the things they were worried about I was worried about, and from my perspective it's like why are you stressed about it?

So getting to pour into those girls, everybody at James Madison and then at Indiana University for two years, all of them, every single person is a big reason for who I am today and my mental space and all that stuff.

So...

Q. How long was the break, and when did you decide you wanted to get back into competitive play?

IVY SHEPHERD: So I kind of like -- what did I do? So I got done in Kentucky; then I played a U.S. Women's Open qualifier in Virginia. That would've been in 2024. And then I didn't play one the next year.

Then this year I got pneumonia before it so didn't get to do that. Crackling in the lungs, that was a hard one. I was feeling really good with my game, kind of like this week. I was like, man, I think I can make U.S. Women's Open. Like this is pretty cool. And then woke up and couldn't breathe and went to the hospital. Yeah, it's pretty bad. I wouldn't do anything.

Actually still drove to the course and tried to play a practice round. Probably shouldn't do that.

But that's kind of really the only competitive things I've been doing since. So I think I just told myself that I'm only allowed to play again if I can actually do it the right way

which is to enjoy it and understand it's just a blessing to be able to get to walk this golf course or swing a golf club and not be in pain.

Like pressure is a privilege. People always say that, but I wasn't going to let myself compete at that level until I was ready. As much as I wanted to say it was my timing it wasn't my timing. It was the Lord's timing. I think he had it all figured out.

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