

Women's Olympic Golf Competition

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Paris, France

Le Golf National

Ashleigh Buhai

Press Conference



Q. How would you sum up your round?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, very steady. Very happy with the way I played. I committed to my shots well, which is what you have to do around the golf course. And it's not just about going at the flags, you've got to hit it to your areas and zones, I like to say, and be aggressive to that. And I think I did that very well today.

Q. And how does it feel to be back on the Olympic stage after you skipped the Tokyo?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, it's great. Obviously that was the hardest decision I'd say I had to make in my career, not to go to Tokyo. But with everything that was going on in the world, a lot of us were dealing with a lot of anxiety and everything that was going on. So I knew Paris was only three years after that, and I'd be able to be here. And I'm very happy to be here.

Q. And what was the atmosphere like out on the course?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: It was amazing. Celine was two groups in front of us, so we kind of had the crowds all around. There were South Africans out there with some flags too. So it was cool to have that support.

Q. Can you just talk about the development of the game of golf as an Olympic sport as well compared to, like, your time in Rio and now here in Paris?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, I think it's obviously grown tremendously, all the players. You know, Rio, again, is -- unfortunately Rio, what, was Zika, and then we had COVID. So this is the first one where we've finally been all in it. All the players want to be here, and we're treating it as it's like a major for us. We want to be here and try and win a medal.

Q. How much of a relief was it to see your golf bag

yesterday?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: It was a very big relief. Yeah, obviously, not ideal. I played 12 holes. I didn't play everything. But I walked the back nine and had an idea of where I needed to off this golf course and off the tee. And, yeah, like I said, I was very happy with the way I plotted my way around today.

Q. You took some time off obviously ahead of this week. How are you feeling? Did that rest help? You obviously played well today.

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah. It was obviously forced rest. Not what I wanted. But it's good to be playing free again. I've been playing for the last three months, back, and then breaking my toe at KPMG, it hasn't been the best run for me.

And then my golf bag yesterday, I was like can we get a break? And I said to Tanya, my caddie, I said something has to turn eventually. And obviously today it was just great to be able to play and be back out there.

Q. How have you been able to adjust from stepping through to now being back up and trusting that your foot is not going to hurt?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, I mean, it still hurts. I've got a hole in the shoe. So that's what has helped me ultimately, having the hole, because the minute it's a covered shoe, it still like aggravates it on the way through. So this at least just gives the space for if the toe needs to move, it's not going to bang up against the shoe.

I did feel it like the last four holes. But, yeah, it was just great. I can commit, and I'm not worried about it, which is a good thing.

Q. How proud are you of your ability just to grind through? You made the cut at KPMG, and Sahalee was not an easy week. This is not an easy walk. Just to be able to, I mean, even with a hole in your shoe, just push through?



ASHLEIGH BUHAI: Yeah, Sahalee, I don't know. I don't know if it was stupidity or bravery, I don't know. But, yeah, to grind through that, it was, even if I say so myself, pretty impressive.

And then obviously I went to Evian and I tried, and I got through two holes. I just couldn't push, and ultimately I needed to make sure I was going to be ready for this and the stretch that is coming ahead of us.

Q. How did you cut a hole in your golf shoe?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: My physio back in Florida did it for me. So we did a temp work on an old pair, and then I really didn't want to cut it in these nice pretty shoes that my sponsors made up for me, but, yeah, it's what we have to do to get through. And she took a standing off and just knocked it where my toe is and cut a hole in it.

Q. Did you bring any extra pairs, or are you going to be extra careful with this one?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: No, I've got this pair and one more, like, older pair if I need. My worry is going to Scotland for two weeks, the rain. This week the weather is good. We've got to do what we've got to do.

Q. Can I ask, what do you think, some of the players struggled out there. We've heard the greens weren't so easy. What do you think you did well, particularly perhaps compared with some of the other players out there?

ASHLEIGH BUHAI: I think, yeah, today I got off every shot and I really just committed to the shot I was trying to hit. And that's all I could do.

And I think, again, it's playing to certain spaces and zones and taking the flags out of it on certain occasions, like on 18. It's so difficult for us to hole that green that I just hit it up that left side. And, sure, I was disappointed to 3-putt, but, you know, that TV tower was my flag. The flag was out.

And that's kind of what I did well today, took my pars and hit it to the spaces when I needed to. And when I had wedges in my hand, I managed to hit a few close.

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