

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2017

Sunday, July 16, 2017

Hye-Jin Choi

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: It is my pleasure to welcome to the Media Center the runner-up at the 2017 U.S. Women's Open Championship, Hye-Jin Choi.

Hye-Jin is 17 years old from Korea. Played beautifully throughout the week and, in fact, recorded the lowest 72 hole score by an amateur in championship history.

She bested her four day total of 279, bested the previous mark of 283 set by Grace Park in 1999 by four strokes.

She is also the fourth in history to finish solo 2nd as an amateur at the Women's Open. She's the first since Jenny Chuasiriporn in 1998 who memorably lost in the playoff.

Also, the first runner-up finisher an amateur since 2005 when Morgan Pressel and Brittany Lang finished tied. Overall, an incredible week of golf here for Hye-Jin.

Can you talk a little bit about your experience and how you feel playing so well this week?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, this tournament for me even I could just come and play, that alone would be an honor but, on top of that, it was an excellent play and I get the runner-up and it is unbelievably joyous thing for me and I try to have fun all along and that was kind of always back of my mind.

Of course, some of the play could have been better but I think overall I had a great time.

THE MODERATOR: Did you surprise yourself by how well you played this week?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, this is a tournament that world's greatest players come and compete so not only myself but I thought everybody else going to have a great result and actually how well I finished, it's bit of a surprise to myself as well.

THE MODERATOR: It's beautifully played. Very good job. Open to it questions.

Q. You came very close to winning today. Are you more disappointed that you didn't win or overall



pleased at how you played?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, when I had a birdie at the 15th hole I thought that I may have a chance, that went through my mind and other people were saying that I might have a chance, but at the 16th hole my ball went into the hazard.

At the time I felt that all this work, hard work I put together was going to disappear so I was bit disappointed but I had to refocus back to the remaining two holes.

So, I think I had to have a good wrap up and so I think that's how I was able to finish okay.

Q. There's a lot of money that goes to the second place finisher (laughter). How sorry are you that you cannot get that money?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, I mean it will be nice if I could get the money but I think my primary goal was to come here and compete so, to me, getting this second place in runner-up actually means more to me and it's a greater honor for me so I am not really focusing on the prize money for now.

Q. Congratulations on your great finish.

On 16, with all of the people around the clubhouse in the balcony, that was quite a big stage.

Have you ever played in an environment like that before and can you walk us through what was going through your mind as you stepped over that shot?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, I don't know if that big crowd had a lot -- anything -- much to do with how I played. I think from yesterday I had a big gallery following me even from the No. 1 hole and I think it's just mainly because I try to control my shot but it did not happen. That's why it ended up as a missed shot.

But, having large crowd at that hole, I don't think it had much psychological impact, I think.

THE MODERATOR: Do you enjoy playing in front of a large crowd?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Before I come -- before coming here in Korea I did not really, had not really thought about

having a large crowd following me but yesterday and today was good number of people at the gallery following me and cheering me and supported me.

Congratulations on being the runner-up. We'll look forward to see next year.

HYE-JIN CHOI: Thank you.

That was actually a very good experience for me and it was pretty exciting and I kind of got to experience what it is like to have the fans cheering at you and how fun it is. That was a good experience that I take that with me.

THE MODERATOR: Great. Another question. Tom.

Q. When you went to the 16th hole, were you aware that you were was tied for the lead?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Yes, I was.

Q. Did you try to force the issue at that point, did you say, "Okay, let me get a birdie?"

HYE-JIN CHOI: Not really, because 16th hole is a pretty tough one. Rather than pushing myself for getting a birdie, I just was hoping to just get through the hole, maybe with par and I was thinking maybe at the last hole that I might play a little aggressively.

That's what I was thinking.

Q. As were you walking off the course, you looked up and saw the First Lady and the President clapping for you. You appeared to giggle. I'm curious, what was going through your mind when you saw them?

HYE-JIN CHOI: Well, I flew all the way from Korea long distance and being here is definitely a big honor for me and on top of that the U.S. President cheered me and, you know, clapped for me and that is just unbelievable honor. So, I was quite touched.

THE MODERATOR: One question in front.

Q. What club did you use on 16, what was your yardage and what was the length of your putt on 18 for birdie?

HYE-JIN CHOI: The club that I used for the 16th hole was 7-iron. I think the yardage, I'm not familiar with the yardage system so I'll say in meters. I think it was about 130 meters. That is a bit -- it's a distance probably not quite right to use No. 7 so I think I was trying to squeeze that distance and maybe that extra effort somehow ended up in the missed shot.

I think the putting on the 18th hole, I think the distance was about three meters, I would say.

THE MODERATOR: Do we have any other questions? Hye-Jin, wonderfully played this week. It was a pleasure. We all greatly enjoyed watching you play.