

U.S. Girls' Junior

Press Conference

Friday, July 24, 2015

Jayna Choi



Q. We haven't really talked very much to you throughout the week and you've been advancing and advancing, so I wanted to write a feature, short feature on you for the website. You made it to the semifinal round, the final four golfers, at age 14 when you've never played in a USGA championship before. Did you expect to get this far?

JAYNA CHOI: No, I did not actually, honestly, but I did try to get as far as I could because it is my first, and I was kind of nervous, but I still tried my best, and it's gotten me this far, so I'm blessed.

Q. How did you prepare for coming to this championship?

JAYNA CHOI: I've been working really hard on my putting kind of. I would just go to the golf course all day basically, and so that was --

Q. Do you play a lot of golf at home?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. You were in some junior tournaments this year in Tennessee, right?

JAYNA CHOI: Yes.

Q. So you've had a lot of success in Tennessee. How did you get started playing golf?

JAYNA CHOI: My brother, he played golf at age 7, and I would just follow him around, just whenever he went out my dad would take me, and I would just play around with it, and I just started getting like serious about it.

Q. So this was a family thing. Does your brother still play golf?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh. He plays golf for Baylor.

Q. Is he on the team there?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. So is the family tie sort of what's kept you playing competitively since then?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh, basically, and I kind of enjoyed the competitiveness. It just got me focused and everything.

Q. When did you play your first junior tournament?

JAYNA CHOI: Age 5 maybe, somewhere around there. That's when I kind of started playing little bits of tournaments and just having fun with it.

Q. That's a really young age to start, I think.

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. Honestly, I didn't know that they had competitive tournaments for kids at a young age like five.

JAYNA CHOI: It was like little par-3 courses, you know, just probably USJGT.

Q. Do you also play for your high school team?

JAYNA CHOI: I am going to high school right now, so I will be joining the team.

Q. You're a rising freshman?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. What's the name of the high school you're going to?

JAYNA CHOI: Houston High School.

Q. Is it near where you live in Tennessee?

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah.

Q. What else do you like to do outside of golf?

JAYNA CHOI: I like to hang out with friends, watch movies, watch TV, and just relax. Sometimes read but not often.

Q. It's hard to find time to read.

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah.

Q. Throughout the week, throughout match play, you've had some really close victories and some larger margin victories. It's like you've been able to win in a variety of ways. What do you think the reason for that is, and why are you so accomplished at winning in a bunch of different ways?

JAYNA CHOI: Well, the first match play we went throughout the 18 holes, and my goal was just to try to win, but later on I tried to like end it faster because I kind of got tired because of all the heat and everything. But that was mainly my goal. I just tried my best.

Q. Later this year, I guess next month, you're going to be in the Women's Amateur, also, in Oregon?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. Is this the first year that you've tried to qualify for a USGA championship or have you tried in the past?

JAYNA CHOI: I've tried in the past, the girls' championship, and this is my first year to get in.

Q. Your first year to get into this or the Women's Am, right?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh. I think the Women's Am this year was the first try.

Q. So it's sort of a banner year for you between winning some junior golf tournaments in Tennessee and you're going to be starting high school on top of all of this and being in two USGA championships this summer, that's pretty fantastic.

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah.

Q. For you to get this far in the championship in your very first time playing a USGA event is remarkable to anybody who's watching.

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. How about your victory earlier today? I know you bowed out today, but before that you had a really close match with Annika.

JAYNA CHOI: Right. We went up and down a lot, but on the last hole I actually parred that hole. I missed a birdie putt, but she bogeyed it. It was a close one.

Q. Really close, down to the 18th.

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh.

Q. And a lot of matches this week have been going into extra holes, 20 or 21 holes.

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah, match play you never know what's going to happen.

Q. Have you played match play in your junior tournaments before?

JAYNA CHOI: No, this is my first time.

Q. You've never played in any sort of match play tournament?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-uh, not that I remember right now.

Q. Pretty good showing I'd say for your first time ever doing match play?

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah, I was really nervous when they would say, you can pick it up, it's all good, and I would be like, pick it up like this?

Q. With having no prior playing experience in a

match play event coming in, did that make you nervous at all? Did it make you question a lot of things?

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah.

Q. Did you read up on the format of the tournament at all before you came in?

JAYNA CHOI: Actually I called one of the staff members and they helped me with the rules step by step.

Q. One of the USGA staff members?

JAYNA CHOI: Uh-huh, and my brother would help me with it, too, on the phone. I was pretty confident with the rules, but again, like picking up the ball when they said it's good, I would like ask them twice or something to make sure.

Q. You can never be too sure.

JAYNA CHOI: Yeah, so -- yeah.

Q. Do you have anything else you want to add about your week, anything peculiar or special happen this week?

JAYNA CHOI: No, I think that's it.