

U.S. WOMEN'S MID-AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

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Margaret Shirley

Choudrant, Louisiana

Q. Third straight match play final in this event. It's a pretty short list of people that played in three straight match finals in the same event. You're on the same list as Tiger Woods, for one. Has that hit you yet?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Oh, well, no. I had no idea. There is so much luck involved in doing that. I mean, I played really well today. But that's -- I don't know how to put that into words, to be quite honest.

Q. Semifinal match, second straight day you were pushed on the front nine and really had to battle back to get through. You think that helps you going into tomorrow?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah. You just have to stay so patient on this golf course. I think I was 2-down after 4. I'm not even sure. I was hitting the ball well and had a couple bogeys, and Christina was playing really well.

Luckily got one back on 8 and then hit one to about a foot on 9 to get it back to all square.

Then I played really, really good golf on the back. Christina did as well. She had a couple miscues, but she had a bad lie. I felt bad. She had a bad lie on 17 and didn't hit a great third shot there.

But we both played well. I hate that one of us had to lose. It was a really good match.

Q. You played against her in this event before?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: I have not.

Q. You've both been mainstays late in this event.

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah, it's the first time I played against her. Could not be a nicer girl. Her husband is fantastic. We had a great time out there.

Q. Seemed like your chipping was really on pointe. A lot of times you went from chipping to do a conceded putt.

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah, that's always nice. I was telling my dad some of these it's almost easier to miss the green and chip up than be on the green and putting.

These greens are the toughest I've ever putted on and hit second shots into, honestly. You can hit a great shot and be 15 feet away. I was scared to death on a 15-footer earlier today uphill. It's just because if you hit it two feet past you're down another hill.

It's a hard, hard golf course. You just have to stay so patient on it.

Q. How much do you think being in the finals the last two years will help you going into tomorrow? Your opponent is a first timer.

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah, it'll be fun. It's always fun to be that last group. Hopefully I can draw on some experience. But also knowing that I was able to win last year and not having that pressure of getting it I think will definitely help out.

Q. You went 17 holes in your last match today; your opponent won 8 and 6. What's do you think is more beneficial? You got pushed and got to play almost the entire course, whereas she will get to rest but didn't play the final six holes.

MARGARET SHIRLEY: You know, it is what it is. I don't know that it's going to have -- I think your

adrenaline is going so much in the final match that it doesn't matter if you've gone extra holes in every single match or won 8 and 6 every single match. Your adrenaline is going to get you through it.

Q. Biggest thinking looking to do tomorrow to win this thing? What are you going to have to do to win this thing?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Sound like a broken record, but you have to stay patient. Just knowing you're going to have bogeys but knowing you can hit some good shots.

You know, I actually had a couple good opportunities at birdies today which I hadn't seen the past couple days. I'm just happy to be here, honestly. If someone would have told me when I was laying down in that room on Sunday afternoon an hour before my tee time that I would be here I would tell you that you were crazy.

So I'm just happy to be here, to be quite honest.

Q. Still feeling the effects?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: No. Yesterday morning I was. I was still really fatigued and a real bad headache. I was great. As my mom said when I woke up this morning that I was much more sarcastic so she knew I was back to normal. That was her give away.

Yeah, I feel a lot better than I did a couple days ago.

Q. Reaching the finals this year, how is it different than the previous two years? Or is it?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah, the first year I think I went extra holes in a couple of my matches. Last year I -- I don't want to say -- it's never easy, but I think I had a couple bigger wins last year.

And then this year I just feel really calm out there. Just kind of, I don't know. It's just been -- I don't know how to describe it. Just kind of a calm year for some reason.

Q. Because you already achieved?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: I think so. I think that pressure, you know, in 2013, you know, it's first time I had gotten -- I think I got knocked out in the round of 16 the first year I played and kind of kept going.

You know, so I think that was a little different. But I think now that I have won since last year it's just if I win, great; if I don't, doesn't matter because I have won. That's really neat that no one can take away.

Q. Going back to the history thing when he said Tiger Woods, but Hollis Stacy, Glenna Collett Vare, Juli Inkster, Carol Semple Thompson. How many of those do you...

MARGARET SHIRLEY: That's pretty elite company. Honestly I have no words. I never would've dreamed of myself being up there with a Tiger Woods or Juli Inkster or Carol Semple Thompson, the best amateur. Hollis Stacy. I mean, that's an incredible list, and to have my name to it is really special.

Hard to believe.

Q. You played in two championship matches. Won one and lost one. What's the difference between winning in a championship match and losing? What are the key differences?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah, I keep going back to it. It's not getting you ahead of yourself and you start thinking or want to start thinking about your acceptance speech on 16.

I think he was 2-up in that one in Biltmore and lost. You just can't get ahead of yourself. It's the biggest cliché in golf, but one shot at a time. It's kind of hard to hit two, but...

You have to stay in the present and not think, Okay, what am I going to do on the next hole. You just really have to focus on the shot at hand. Just, like I say, you have to stay patient, especially out here.

Q. Will you even look at what she's done? Lauren Greenleaf, will you look at her scores at all?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: I mean, maybe. It's not going to affect what I do. I can only control myself. If someone gets a hot putter I can't control that. All I can control is what I do and my mindset and everything.

But I know obviously she's a great player. She knocked out someone 8 and 6 today in a semifinal. That is fantastic. So I know it's going to be a tough match. No doubt about that.

Q. Do you know anything about her?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: I don't. I think she's from Virginia. She played on that state team, I believe. Is that correct?

Q. Yes.

MARGARET SHIRLEY: I know she played well up there, if I'm not mistaken. So, yeah. That's it. I don't know much about her.

Q. Albeit last two years it was you and Julia Potter, but this will be the third straight final with two competitors in their 20s. Do you see an influx of young talent at the mid-am level over the last few years?

MARGARET SHIRLEY: Yeah. I just see it as I think the kids going into college, and obviously once they graduate they're definitely becoming better now. Especially going into college. So obviously we're starting to see that now with the 25, 26 year olds.

I definitely think you're going to start seeing some of the younger kids come up and compete.