

August 18, 2007



An Interview With:

ALENA SHARP

THE MODERATOR: Just in the nick of time before the rain. Tell us a little bit about your round today.

ALENA SHARP: I started off really well. I hit the first seven greens. I had a lot of chances at birdie. I only made one, and then I bogeyed 8, birdied 9, and it was just like the gates had opened. I was hitting it so well, so close to the hole. I missed a few putts but I had some tap-ins for birdies. And very pleased with my round, 4-under, to come back on a Saturday. I haven't really played well on the weekend this year, so it's a great start to my weekend for this tournament.

Q. Great round, but when you look back on it, is it maybe a little bit frustrating that even at 4-under you look at those opportunities early in the round and you left some on the table there?

ALENA SHARP: Yeah, I did, but I also hit a lot of shots very close to the pin where I didn't have to make a tough putt. Three of my birdies were two feet, so I didn't have to make those putts. The putts that I missed today were all on the high side, very well-struck. I hit my lines, so I can't be really upset with it.

Q. At what point did you figure you were kind of in the groove and start to turn things on?

ALENA SHARP: I hit it close on 9, and then hit it close on 10 and hit it close on 11 and 12, and it was like once I hit -- I hit a 4-iron in on 11 to two feet, and once I did that, I just felt really confident, more that I was in the zone and hitting fairways and greens and giving myself good chances at birdie. I fell like the turning point of my round was No. 9 when I hit it really close there.

Q. A Canadian tournament, obviously you're the top Canadian. Is there a pressure that's coming along with that?

ALENA SHARP: Well, I felt like I didn't have a lot of pressure going into today because I was eight shots back. But now shooting a good round today, maybe a little bit more pressure for tomorrow, depending on the weather. It's not very nice out right now. I finished before the rain came. Who knows what's going to happen this afternoon. I just want to do what I did.

I told you guys yesterday that I need to work on my irons, and my irons were great today, so if I can get that going tomorrow, make some more putts, maybe there's a chance to win this tournament.

Q. Some of your colleagues have described you as the future of women's golf in Canada. How does that responsibility sit with you?

ALENA SHARP: I think it's a big responsibility because I see how Lorie's has pressure but not just by the fans in Canada. But she's a great ambassador to our country and she's done so well, and to follow in her footsteps would be something that I would really look forward to. It's a lot of pressure, but you've got to try and forget about it when you're on the golf course and smile when you get off the golf course and just be happy that you're the one that they want to win.

I'm looking forward to it in the future. I really love Canada, I love coming back home. I live in Phoenix in the winter, but I love coming home, and the people in Canada are always behind the Canadian golfers, and that's something that is really important to me.

Q. What kind of a mudder are you? How do you play in the rain? And being a Canadian, is there an opportunity for an advantage?

ALENA SHARP: Yeah, obviously us Canadians, we don't get the great weather that they do in the U.S. and the south, and when I was growing up I would play and practice in the rain because you have to know how to play in all types of weather, and I think that has helped me. Going to school at New Mexico State, I learned to play in really horrible winds in the spring.

Yeah, I would say I'm a mudder. I play better when the conditions are not so great.

Q. There have been some kind of unflattering observations about the state of Canadian women's golf. As one of those leaders, what's your take on the so-called next generation?

ALENA SHARP: Well, I'm a member at Brantford Golf and Country Club, and there are three juniors that are 16 and 17 years old, and I think those three are going to be the up-and-coming players out of Ontario. I don't really keep up with junior golf on the west coast.

But there is potential there for a lot of kids to be strong players, and they're going through the RCGA program, which is something that is so much stronger now than when I was a junior, and I think that they have a lot of opportunity. If they keep getting the experiences, they're going to play better.

You may say that they're not doing it right now, but it's going to come. It usually comes and goes in waves, and I think there's a group of 16-, 17-, 18-year-olds in our country that are going to step up, go to college, learn how to play down in the U.S. and get away from their parents, and I think that they're the future.

We have some players on the Futures Tour that have just turned pro, as well. You can't count them out just because they're not doing so well right now. They have the potential to be very good golfers.

Q. Can you talk about Ochoa and how you relate to her, what kind of a person you think she is, how she treats you and just what she means to you being up there?

ALENA SHARP: I played against Lorena in 1999 in the U.S. Amateur, and we played and she beat me 2 & 1. We went down to the 18th hole. She's a great player. She's very humble. She always says hello. She's an amazing golfer. She does it every week, and she's always up there at the top of the leaderboard every week.

She works hard at her game, and she deserves to be there. It's something I would like to do, too. To be No. 1 in the world, that's my goal eventually, and to watch her play consistently week in and week out, that's one of my goals, as well.

Q. 67 today, I guess the question is how do you learn to sleep on playing well,

being in contention for probably your best finish the season on Tour this year?

ALENA SHARP: Sorry, what was the question?

Q. When you're going into the final round of an event, you're looking at perhaps your best finish of the season, I just wonder as you become an elite player, what's it like to learn how to sleep on playing well? What's up the night before when you're in the hunt?

ALENA SHARP: I think for me I need -- now that it's raining, I'm not going to practice. I'm going to go to the mall and just get away from here and not think about it, just relax and try and just settle down because I'm full of adrenaline right now. Playing the back nine, shooting 3-under.

But for me I need to make sure I get rest and I stop thinking about golf, read a book or watch a movie. I'm reading Harry Potter right now so I'll probably read some of that tonight. If I'm nervous in the morning I might go for a little run tomorrow morning because I'll be later on in the day. Normally I need to do something like that to calm myself down.

Q. You said those kids have to get away from their parents. What exactly do you mean?

ALENA SHARP: Well, what I meant by that -- I didn't mean it as a negative. I mean when I went away to University, I learned how to live on my own, how to do my laundry, how to grocery shop, how to cook, all those things, go to school, work out, practice. You have to learn how to manage your schedule, and that's what I meant.

I didn't mean that parents are -- my parents are great people. They never pushed me. There are parents out there that push certain golfers, but what I meant was, yeah, to get away and to learn what it is to live on your own because when you're out here, most of the time your parents are out working and you don't get to spend the whole week with them, so you have to learn how to manage your time. It's a lonely life out here unless you're traveling with somebody.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us this afternoon. Congratulations on your round today, and best of luck tomorrow.

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