

September 28, 2017



An interview with:

TENNESSEE

Q. Feel like you're getting a taste of it right away, the whirlwind of winning a USGA Championship. Tell me what's going through your mind.

RILEY RENNELL: This is a some of I mean this is a team event, and what was best about it was we a contributed of they kind of had a rough start and I kind of just hung in there for them and I kind of had a rough second day and, you know, they came through for me.

JAYNA CHOI: What's really awesome is it's the last championship for the state team, so I think it's a total blessing having them have your back and everything.

RILEY RENNELL: Yes. I mean, it was a real team event.

Q. If you want to...

ASHLEY GILLIAM: I don't know what to say.

Q. You brought up a good point. You all contributed. That's not always the case. Sometimes you have two stronger players, but all of you contributed scores to the total final scores. Talk about the chemistry you guys had and the group effort.

PLAYER: I mean, we've all been friends forever, haven't we?

PLAYER: Since we were eight years old.

PLAYER: Yeah. We've played a lot of junior golf together, so to play an event like this, we really -- I mean, we were close, but I think this has brought us together more because we really had to come through for each other and support each other.

Golf is such an individual sport; it's crazy.

Q. Do you have any feeling of where you stand? In an event like this it's a little different. When you're out there playing, do you have any idea what's going on as far as the leaderboard?

PLAYER: Personally I try not to look at the leaderboard.

PLAYER: Right.

PLAYER: I think it's just playing your own game, and then at the end knowing that you've got it I think is just a lot better.

PLAYER: Yeah. Just like focusing on each shot at a time and not worrying about how everyone else is doing.

Q. What were your expectations coming into this week as a team?

PLAYER: I mean, we looked at -- I mean, compared to the field we were one of the stronger teams, but there were a lot of good players. So winning this is actually a really big honor. It's a USGA event, so we're very proud to win this event.

PLAYER: Uh-huh.

Q. Talk about the golf course. How different is this from the courses you're used to playing in the southeast?

PLAYER: It's a lot windier.

PLAYER: And the altitude.

PLAYER: Yeah, the altitude. Had to get used to the altitude a little bit, but it's a lot different from Tennessee.

PLAYER: Uh-huh.

Q. When you realize you're going to win, what's kind of going through your head on the ninth green out there?

PLAYER: Well she was last.

PLAYER: Yeah, I had two putt to win, and I putted to around two feet and I didn't know I had to make it, so...

PLAYER: We tried to kind of make it that way, keep it chill. Like be quiet, be quiet, she's putting.

Q. Part of you that doesn't want her to

know, make her nervous?

PLAYER: Right, yeah.

Q. Trying to give her some indication that you're in good shape.

PLAYER: It depends on like the person, because some people will be like, Oh, you've got two putts to win. They'll be like, Oh, yeah, I'll just do two putts; whereas some people could get a little nervous and it could effect their performance, so, you know, just trying to do what's best for them.

Q. You're going to go back to Tennessee I understand and play a team event against each other.

PLAYER: We are.

PLAYER: They are.

PLAYER: We are. I'm east and she's west.

PLAYER: Go west! (Laughter.)

Q. How different will that be after this week?

PLAYER: I'm not really sure. It'll be a lot more competitive between EACH other, but we'll still have fun and have the memory.

PLAYER: We'll both still support each other.

PLAYER: Friendly rivalry, but always teammates now.

Q. Where does this rank in events you've played in and won in your golf careers?

PLAYER: This is definitely -- yeah, this is the coolest.

PLAYER: Very prestigious.

PLAYER: It's a USGA event. Not a lot of people can call themselves USGA champions.

PLAYER: Right.

PLAYER: And, Hey, we joined the board.

Q. Ashley, not to bring up the trophy part, but how heavy was that?

ASHLEY GILLIAM: It was very heavy. I think I'll be sore tomorrow.

Q. Were you happy at least it was a two-piece instead of just one when you dropped it?

ASHLEY GILLIAM: Yeah, I was happy I didn't break it. (Laughter), that I didn't scratch it. It's my dad's fault.

PLAYER: Yeah, caddie's fault. Caddie should have grabbed it a little harder. (Laughter.)

...when all is said, we're done.®

ASAPsports

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Q. When you're out there and you got the trophy and everybody is taking the pictures, what's that feeling like?

PLAYER: It's amazing.

PLAYER: It's the best.

PLAYER: It's amazing. I mean, to know we have all worked together and we've worked so hard and all our hard work is being rewarded.

PLAYER: Finally paying off, yeah.

PLAYER: Yeah.

Q. How much team conversations or preparation goes into an event like this. Do you play together leading up to this, or just kind of show up and give it your best?

PLAYER: Well, we all play in like junior golf, so all have our own schedules and we play in competitive events and stuff. We just try and keep our play sharp.

Before the tournament starts we definitely have a strategy and a lot of team putting forth towards what we need to do.

PLAYER: A lot of team dinners.

PLAYER: Yeah, a lot team dinners, a lot of team meetings.

Q. Who was here with you guys friends or family-wise this week?

PLAYER: My dad was here with me.

PLAYER: My mom is here with me.

PLAYER: My mom.

Q. A lot of texts from back home?

PLAYER: Yeah.

PLAYER: My battery dies out early so I'm not sure. (Laughter.)

Q. Does that out here.

PLAYER: I haven't checked my phone yet but I'm sure.

PLAYER: I'm sure it's going to blow up, dude.

PLAYER: Yeah. And my dad is usually the one who comes on the events, so it's kind of a trip for my mom and I'm really happy she got to come.

Q. What about the weather? I know you guys probably are used to rain, but add the cold and the wind.

PLAYER: Yeah, the second day around

Tennessee - 09.28.17

the back nine it got really rough. Wasn't just windy and warm, it was windy and cold.

PLAYER: That's a totally different feeling, too.

PLAYER: Yeah. The first day, sorry, not the second day. The first day.

Q. What about the second day?

PLAYER: Second day was better.

PLAYER: Second day was better. I mean, there was a lot rain so everything was playing completely different. This is the desert, and when you have rain in the desert it's going to affect the golf course a lot differently because everything is usually like rolling out.

But everything just like stuck and it's all soaked and stuff. The maintenance crew did a great job holding it together.

Q. Were you able to adjust quickly to the conditions early on?

PLAYER: I would say so.

PLAYER: We tried.

PLAYER: Uh-huh.

Q. Forecast looked a lot worse coming into today. Did you guys think about that? Was that a distraction coming in? There was a lot of thought that maybe you wouldn't be able to play today.

PLAYER: Right.

PLAYER: Yeah.

PLAYER: We were kind of nervous about that but, I'm glad that the weather held up for us.

PLAYER: Yeah. It would've been kind of unfortunate, because the weather was supposed to be really bad today and they were probably going cancel today, so we probably wouldn't have won or we probably wouldn't have been able to have this opportunity to come back.

It's great that it held up for us.

PLAYER: Uh-huh.

Q. Individually assess your golf game for the week. Start with Riley. Just talk about how you played and how satisfied you are with your game after leaving here.

RILEY RENNELL: I'm pretty satisfied. I played pretty well the front the first day.

Second day I kind of had a rough little thing going with the putter.

Third day I just kind of scrapped it around and found a way to come in under par.

I'm pretty satisfied. Just kind of need a little work on the putter.

Q. Jayna?

JAYNA CHOI: I think my golf game could have been a lot better of the I had a little trouble with my putting. I'm glad that I had teammates that could have my back when it didn't work out.

Q. And then you tied for the lowest individual round of the tournament yesterday. Talk about your performance.

ASHLEY GILLIAM: Yeah, the first day it was a little rough, but I kept it together. Then the second day I was playing well, putting good, and got it to 5-under.

And then today I played pretty solid.

Q. What are your plans? What do you want to do with the trophy now in your hands? Any fun...

PLAYER: Frame it, or like get a box, a glass box for it.

Q. Who gets it first? How are you going to divvy it up?

PLAYER: I think it's going to go to the golf house for sure, yeah.

Q. Kind of curious this morning when you wake up and you were able to catch the tips of the mountains with the snow and everything, that's got to be really odd, especially in September. What was that like waking up and seeing that?

PLAYER: It's beautiful.

PLAYER: Yeah, it was really pretty, but it's different.

PLAYER: Uh-huh.

PLAYER: Real different. I think it's 90 degrees at home.

PLAYER: 90 and humid.

PLAYER: No humidity here.

PLAYER: I've never really been here, to New Mexico. This is really cool to get this opportunity.

Q. You talked a little bit about the altitude. Did it have much of an impact on you guys? How long did it take you guys to get used to it?

PLAYER: It did, definitely. Gave me

headaches.

PLAYER: Yeah.

PLAYER: Yeah, the first day when we first got here it was pretty rough. It was harder to breathe. And also the distance. You hit a little bit, 10% probably on each shot more.

PLAYER: Yeah. I know couple people that actually got kind of sick too. Like my mom got sick and I had couple nose bleeds, so yeah.

Q. Welcome to dry climate.

PLAYER: Yeah.

Q. Do you have any plans on trying to qualify for any other USGA events anything like that? Two of you going to try to play in the women's four-ball together?

PLAYER: I already qualified for the four ball.

PLAYER: There you go.

Q. Who you playing with?

ReplaceName: Abbey Daniel.

Q. Oh, yeah, okay. Cool. What about you guys? Try to qualify for any events next year?

PLAYER: See how things go, yeah.

PLAYER: Definitely.

PLAYER: Definitely USGA events.

PLAYER: Yeah.

PLAYER: Whoo-whoo.

Q. One of the great perks about winning a USGA championship is that your name and your names are going to be up on a wall in the USGA museum. Can you get your head around that?

PLAYER: No.

PLAYER: That's awesome.

Q. Not just for all-time, but now you're the last for this championship. What does that feel like?

PLAYER: Mind blowing. (Laughter.) I mean, our captain kind of just tried to pump us up before, like on the practice round.

PLAYER: Right.

PLAYER: We all went out to dinner and our captain tried to pump it up like, I'm so proud of ya'll for making it here. Ya'll can do this. Ya'll are good players. Ya'll can do this.

She called it, yeah. I mean, she called it, which it's awesome.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

ASAPsports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Tennessee - 09.28.17

4