

U.S Senior Women's Open Championship

Thursday, August 1, 2024
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
Fox Chapel Golf Club

Kaori Yamamoto

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Kaori Yamamoto to the flash interview area here at the U.S. Senior Women's Open Championship. You shot a 4-under 67, which ties the lowest round ever in a first round at this championship. Can you describe how you played today?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: My shots were good and also bad, but I had a lot of lucky bounces, but my putting was very good.

Q. After you bogeyed the 6th hole, you birdied the next two. Can you talk about the birdies on 7 and 8?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: Both of the birdies I hit it pretty close, and I putted well. Shots good, putts good.

Q. You went on to the back side with no bogeys, and you birdied 10, 14 and 16. Which one of those did you like the most?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: No. 14. I hit my tee shot in the fairway bunker, and I had been struggling with my fairway bunker shots for a couple years now. But I hit a great shot out of it, and it got in close, and my caddie and I read it perfectly, and I putted well. That bunker shot was the best in the past four years.

Q. How far did you have from the bunker and how long was the putt?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: To the pin it was 114. The putt was four or five meters, so that would be like 10, 15 feet, I think, or maybe 15, 20 feet.

Q. Since we don't know you in America as well but you've won a lot of tournaments in Japan, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: I started playing golf at 21 years old. I turned pro in the year 2000. I have been playing on the LPGA Tour in Japan ever since and continuously have qualified for the regular tour. Recently I have been playing



on what we call the step-up tour, the mini-tours, and I started playing the senior tour probably in 2018, and I have four victories after that.

Q. Who were your heroes growing up? It could be Japanese heroes or American or other sports.

KAORI YAMAMOTO: Nobody. Not really.

Q. You decided to qualify for this championship and obviously qualified in America and shot 68. What prompted you to try and qualify for this championship?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: I have seen other players from Japan who have been competing in this and done very well. I came over last year and caddied, and I saw how great the people were here, how welcoming the people were at the USGA and the people at Waverley, and I was so overwhelmed by their hospitality, and I really decided that I had to be here. My birthday was three months shy last year, so I was just dying to be here, and it's just how much fun it seemed like.

Ever since I saw the whole setup and everything, I said, I've got to come. That's why I'm here.

Q. Are you having fun on this course, and is there any course that you've ever played before like this one?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: I am definitely having fun but I've never played anything like this.

Q. What would it mean to you to win this championship, and how would you be looked at in Japan if you did win this championship?

KAORI YAMAMOTO: I have been dreaming of playing in this tournament ever since it started, and ever since I started playing as a senior in Japan, which is 45 years old. So it would be just a dream come true.

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