

Marathon Classic presented by Dana

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Toledo, Ohio, USA

Danielle Kang

Quick Quotes

Q. Danielle, great start to this event. Just picked it up right where you left off that last week. What's the difference between this golf course and last week?

DANIELLE KANG: Last week's golf course and this week's golf course are really different. It's a bit softer, shorter, reachable par-5s; greens are not as undulated as last week, so it's a lot of attacking and being aggressive and staying aggressive.

Greens are very receptive, so I think that's the difference between last week and this week.

Q. What do you do in the days off?

DANIELLE KANG: I actually practiced a lot on Tuesday. Played a Pro-Am on Wednesday, and what I was most focused on is to get my wedge numbers down again and green speed. I always think speed would be different here and there, and chipping there was really, really tough. It's different. Different grass. It's bluegrass there; over here it's more bent.

So trying to get more of that feel during the last couple days. Monday I slept.

Q. Certainly. Six birdies today. A lot more in your bag.

DANIELLE KANG: Seven.

Q. Seven? Yeah, seven, you're right. Sorry. My bad. And not one bogey. Really stellar with your ball striking. I know you spent a lot time off season working with Butch. What is the focus for the rest of the week for you to stay on top of your game?

DANIELLE KANG: I was told that if you're playing well, you just got to trust your game and keep playing your game, so that's been my plan since last week and this week. I'm striking it really well. Putting speed is there. Just got to keep trusting it and play my game.



Q. Danielle, a bogey-free 67 today. You played so well last week. Now started off your week really well at Highland Meadows. What's gotten into you so far? You seem to be really happy to be back on tour?

DANIELLE KANG: Well, six, seven months off, definitely miss the competition. Being able to come back here and compete again is what I was most excited about and looking forward to, and I'm just happy to do that.

Q. Inverness last week, very different to Highland Meadows this week. You seemed comfortable out there today. Tell us the story of your round today, seven birdies. Just seemed at home out there.

DANIELLE KANG: Well, Inverness is a bit more stressful, but this golf course -- sorry, it's a bee -- this golf course is a good track. Okay. It's a really good track. Golf course conditions, great. It's a bit different, as around the greens it's not as aggressive as Inverness. And tough. Greens are really receptive out here. Shorter clubs, driver off the tees.

So I'm just trying to take advantage of a lot of things that I could attack the numbers with. So that's what I did today.

Q. What was the strength of your game today? What pushed you to that great score?

DANIELLE KANG: I worked a lot on my putting for the last couple days. Didn't really like how the ball was coming off my putter. But I think that I kind of got a good feel out of it; then today my putting worked really well.

There are days when the ball goes where you see, and that's what happened.

Q. Any of those birdies that were tap-ins, any particular good moments out there, or was it just solid?

DANIELLE KANG: Just solid. Didn't really have any tap-ins. They were all mostly six seven feet. Made the good 10-foot to 15-foot putts. I dropped some 25-footers as well. Made good couple par saves.

All in all, hit some good tee shots and good second shots into greens. Yeah, my putting felt good today.



Q. In a tournament like this where scores are going to be really low, how important is it to get off to a good start like this?

DANIELLE KANG: We have a lot golf left, 72 holes. It's only been 18. You're right though. Scores might be a little bit lower than last week. It's definitely important to putt well and score a little bit lower.

But like I said last week, I can't really worry about what other people are doing. Just got to focus on my own golf game. That's what I did today, and capitalized on a lot of birdie opportunities that I can give myself.

Q. How did you celebrate a win in a COVID era?

DANIELLE KANG: I can celebrate it later. All in all, I had Lizette Salas with me, and her and I's tradition is always to go get ice cream, so her and I went and got ice cream. Probably at like 9:00 at night.

Other than that, we went back home and Amy Yang cooked dinner for me, so that was good. Yeah, didn't get to eat much. Yeah, just mostly phone calls.

Q. Where did you get the ice cream?

DANIELLE KANG: I was looking for Graeter's; that's my favorite ice cream. But there aren't any here, so we went to Baskin Robbins, which is my other favorite.

Q. Do you feel like you've got momentum coming off winning at Inverness and now obviously playing a very good first round here?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. If you think about momentum, I think that would be a pretty good momentum coming in with the win and all. I know I'm hitting it well and I know -- all I kind of focus on is to get the green speed. As long as I got all the breaks and did all my routines to figure that out, then I just got to go out there and play.

Q. That momentum that you have is really something that no other golfer has right now because of long layoff. How much of an advantage do you think that gives you?

DANIELLE KANG: Not sure. I don't know. I don't know how you could put a mark on that. But I feel good about it, which is good.

Q. After such a long layoff, how have you been able to seemingly knock off the rust so quickly and be able to play some of your best golf?

DANIELLE KANG: Just been really eager to come out. Like I said in the beginning, I've been taking six, seven months off of competition, and I'll I've been being looking forward to is to come back out and compete. That's what I'm just out here today and enjoying doing.

Q. Out there it's impossible not to notice the communication you and your caddie had. How important was getting that communication? How important is that communication to your mental game?

DANIELLE KANG: Well, caddies do a lot of different jobs for different players. For me, he's very specific. Targets and a lot of these tee shots that kind of blind tee shots, and we try to narrow down. So smaller the target, better the focus. Try not to be too generic with the numbers.

That's kind of really important between him and I think week, because you can attack a lot of the pins. So instead of just saying around 155, we have to be specific about the numbers, whether it's a little bit behind it or short of it.

So that kind of communication is very important for me this week.

Q. I notice when you're out on the course you're smiling and joking around a lot. How are you able to keep it so lighthearted out there?

DANIELLE KANG: It's fun. Golf is fun. I like coming out. I really love playing golf. More so than anything I love playing the competition, but I really enjoy playing.

Yeah, I did a lot of work during the off time where I wouldn't have to stress so much about mechanics and little less worries about things that I worried about previously.

So just out here to enjoy the golf that I can play and the ability that I'm able to do.

Q. So are there nerves, or is it just pretty much going out and playing?

DANIELLE KANG: Not at 8:20 in the morning on a Thursday, no. Just cruising today.

Q. I know we miss seeing scoreboards on the golf course. Were you ever a scoreboard watcher before? Like even playing Sunday at Inverness when things got tight do you miss taking a peek once in a while?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, I was definitely a scoreboard watcher before this. I talk about that a lot. It's a bit different. I don't know. I don't prefer either, but I'm more

used to seeing the scoreboards periodically throughout the round. Last week I pulled out my phone for the last stretch because I needed to know where I stood for the last three holes.

But like today, although there is a scoreboard or not it doesn't matter. To me it doesn't personally. If someone shot 7-, 8-under, there is nothing I can do about it except I still got to go play golf.

So some people might like it; some might not. It is a little bit different because that's what I was used to, so...

Q. One last question: We've gone into match play time at the U.S. Women's Am. You're a two time Women's Am champ. What's your advice to the next generation of golfers out in Maryland competing hoping to be in your shoes one day?

DANIELLE KANG: Enjoy it, because U.S. Amateur is one of the best events I've ever played. I was on the broadcasting yesterday and they asked me what advice I had for Gabby Ruffles to defend and she would be the first person to defend back to back after me. I just said, It's your week. Just believe that it's your week and ride that momentum, like you said. Just go out and have fun.

It's good times.

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