

# Dana Open presented by Marathon

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Sylvania, Ohio, USA

Highland Meadows Golf Club

## Lydia Ko

### Quick Quotes

**Q. All right, here with Lydia Ko, a 5-under day out there. I know we were just talking to some friends of yours that said it could have been an 8-under, but just take me through what this first day was like for you.**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, he's actually the former CEO of Marathon, so...

**Q. Okay.**

LYDIA KO: So obviously being a past champion here like I've gotten to see them and they've always come out and watched me play a little bit, even though he's retired now.

But, yeah, it was a solid day. In my back nine, which is the front nine, I couldn't really get anything going, but I made a really good birdie putt on 6 to kind of get back to even for that nine.

And then always nice to finish up with a birdie on the last.

**Q. Your first nine holes, the number of birdies out there, just what was going so well for you at the beginning of the day?**

LYDIA KO: I hit the ball really well. I think when I was out of position I was able to make a good up and down. With 17 and 18 being par-5s and not being too windy today, I could get pretty close to the greens.

So it was more of -- it was much easier than hitting pitch shots or like iron shots into the greens. So I think you do have to take advantage of some of the conditions. And the last couple days, even during the pro-am, it was like really windy so the course played a little differently.

But, you know, it was like pretty steady all day, so I tried to keep patient and give myself good opportunities and go from there.

**Q. For you being a past champion of this event, being**



**a two-time champion of this event, I think 2014 and 2016 off the top of my head, when you're able to come back to a place like Toledo, what does that mean to you?**

LYDIA KO: I remember in '14 I shot 80, or might have been 81, at the British Open, and then this was my next -- the week after.

I was obviously not coming in with a lot of great momentum, but I played really solid. The course has changed a little bit with the layout, some of the holes becoming a lot longer than my rookie year and some extra bunkering and all that. I feel like the course itself plays a little different.

But it's always nice to come back to a place that you've played well at. I've had good finishes outside of winning, so it's nice to kind of draw back on those memories.

But at the same time, my game has changed a lot I think over the last few years, so I feel like I'm playing some holes a lot differently. Some holes where it was just an easy driver and I had no worries about it running out or something, and now that might not be the club.

So just trying to play the best golf I can with how I'm playing right now. There is so much golf to be played, and just trying to focus on me and go from from.

**Q. Absolutely. Just being this community, just in general, I know you were talking about the good memories and being able to say hi to the former Marathon CEO, what about the community that just embraces this event that you've felt over the past couple years?**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, Thursday, Friday, yes, there is less people than we'd hope, and especially coming off a week like in Ottawa last week, you know, being in kind of pretty much Brooke's neighborhood.

It feels a little bit different, but normally the crowds get really excited and keeps building up over the weekend. Hopefully we just see more and more people come.



I know there is not like a lot of things going on in this area, so like the LPGA coming around that one time a year, I think it's super exciting for the local people. I'm sure there is a lot of people that are excited for that week, for us to come, and it's kind of their annual thing.

You know, I was talking with Celine out there. There is like a volunteer short left of the green on 8, and we have seen him at the same spot for years.

So, no, it's like as much as it is like an annual stop for us, it's I feel like annual exciting week for the volunteers and the fans.

So we're excited, and we're obviously always excited to come back to a place where people are as excited as us to see, and to see some of the best female golfers play.

**Q. Before I wrap it up, a little bit off the course. Going to talk tennis. Serena Williams at the U.S. Open. We've talked to a couple players as they've come in about making her crowing moment be at the U.S. Open. Have you been able to catch her over the past couple days, and what is it like seeing someone like that, a woman athlete like that, kind of rise to the top of her game?**

LYDIA KO: Yeah, I mean, people say she's the GOAT. I feel like she's maybe one of the greatest all-time athletes, not just in tennis.

No, she was a dominant player, tennis player, and then she had her beautiful daughter and then she came out dominating again. It's very hard to do. Even when I see some of the LPGA moms I'm like, wow, it's like hard enough doing one thing, but to juggle, not two, it's multiple things, it's like pretty crazy.

So, yeah, you know, she announced that this is going to be her final thing. I'm sure people that are playing against her, yes, they want to win, but also like root for her as well.

I think what she's done for not tennis and not just like sports, like what she's done for women empowerment is so special.

I think she changed the game and I think she changed how people perceive female athletes. So she's a role model to many, and we'll be rooting for her the next two weeks.

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