

NW Arkansas Championship

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Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Atthaya Thitikul

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, I'm here in the media center at the 2023 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship with the defending champion, Atthaya Thitikul. Welcome back. How does it feel to be back?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, thank you. I mean, like always love coming back here. I mean, last year was my first year here in Arkansas, but feel like everything is perfect with the win. Of course with the win. Also the people around here, neighborhood, they are so nice.

Like they smile, they cheering on the course so the city is pretty nice, too.

Q. And just take us back to the win last year. What was it like entering into the tournament and what your hopes were heading into last year.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, it's was one of my best I think stop by in the career. I mean, like had a 10-under on second round, which is really incredible and surreal.

You know, yeah, feel pretty great about last year, all the good memories here. Of course like playing off with DK also a tough fight out there, too.

Q. You mentioned your 61 which tied for the lowest 18-hole scoring record out here. What do you remember from that round?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: I think I did remember a really good shot on like par-5 on like 7. I had like 3-wood. I don't know I going to reach it but it's run out and I just like three feet for the second -- like for the eagle putt. It was just really amazing.

And I think this tournament last year was a tournament that I really enjoyed it myself out there only the course, which my mind is really blank out there. If you remember my words last year. I say this to Megan or some other media that my mind is blank out there. Really enjoy myself out on the course with my caddie and had a good result. I love this tournament.



Q. Exciting end last year with the playoff against Danielle Kang. I was digging through some stats and you have gone to a playoff twice and won both of those on the LPGA Tour. What is it about a playoff for you that -- the energy, excitement maybe of it?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, of course, yes. It's pretty excited. I mean, especially my first win on the LPGA Tour was like with the playoff, with Nanna. She's just like won the Handa LPGA a few weeks ago when I playoff with her, and then of course it's a tough fight.

I mean, like playing off out here on the LPGA never been easy at all. We had a lot of talented players out there and we don't know what's going to happen because it's playoff. If you hit a bad shot it's mean it's nearly over. You don't have that much chance to bounceback.

I think it's a good sign when you get on the playoff which mean you have a chance to get a win, like close by the trophy, which is tough as always to be a playoff, but I would love it to be on the playoff like every week would be great. (Laughter.)

Q. Take me back. You won this event last year. You have a bunch of Top 10s this year. Talk to me about how much confidence this win gave you last year. It seems like you had -- you were kind of building something but seems like that confidence has -- you've taken your game to another level since you won this. Do you agree with that?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yes, I do. I do. I mean, like I boost a lot of confidence here last year after finishing my -- I do have a really good golf coming on the end of last year, going to Korea, Japan, ending up in CME, which is really nice for me last year.

And also coming on this year, I feel like play pretty good golf out there on the beginning of the year, too. Just didn't get the job done much. But I think it's good enough -- it's good sign that I'm just lucky last year, and then just like a new face on the LPGA Tour, which I know I need a lot of more experience on it, because it's hard sometime. The golf going up and golf always going down, too. It's not just up. It's a rollercoaster in my career. I do have a rollercoaster in my career this year, too, which is fun.



I mean, I have learn a lot of things this year about life balance and golf, which is like golf or life.

Q. Talk to me about being the defending champ. What kind of mindset are you taking with that? Are you just going to have fun or do you feel extra pressure being the defending champ. How are you feeling heading into this week?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Feel like first making the cut is not enough for me this week, because, I mean, all the thing, it's not perfect now. I mean, like hitting the balls, it's okay. Putting, chipping is fine. Depend on the week.

But what is perfect is me enjoying myself out on the course and my caddie having fun out there.

I have a lot like a like a time that I am not really enjoying it when I'm playing golf out there. Not really enjoying it. Kind of lose my smile. And then what I want to do every single event from now, then it's just enjoy, have fun. I don't know what's the result going to come. We have to work out on it anyway. But like what I have to do on the course every time I go out, it's enjoy.

Q. Just the thought of back to back though, that would be pretty sweet.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yes, of course. We would love to, but who knows. Everything can happen. But this remind me a lot of good things out there. I do love playing here. I do love coming back here, playing a good course, good conditions out there.

Q. Yeah, for sure. Talk to me a little about your career. You're 20. Coming off a Rookie of the Year. Ranked first in the world last year. Talk about your motivations. Seems like especially this year you have a ton of Top 10s; didn't seem like were satisfied from last year. Talk to me about taking your game to another level.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yeah, it's a lot of good thing happen last year, and also this year. Even though we had a tough time, but I think it's kind of tell that, yeah, you had a bunch of top 10. You can survive on the tour. Was just like really amazing for me.

But like the level or the golf games, the game of golf, you always, always have to improve it anyway. Every player is trying to improve our games in and off the course, so which is mean I'm getting there and also trying to keep working, working to be a better person in and off the course.

Q. You mention the work-life balance, golf-life balance. What are some specific examples you learned this year to help manage that?

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Yes, I do. I think I did like put a lot of pressure on myself or a lot of expectations. One came from myself, and two maybe from fans, player around me. But it's just like -- when you had a tough time, I mean, when I hit it good, which is mean, yeah, I just hit it good. I just have a good day.

When I hit it bad or have a bad day, didn't shoot it like under par or something, which is mean just golf. It's bad golf. Not a bad life. You still have like so many people around you that love the way you are. They don't love the result or love the effect. They just love Jeeno who is Jeeno. Not Jeeno or Atthaya who is No. 1 in the world or is the LPGA winner. It's a lot of people like that beside you.

It's kind of like it's just not golf 24 hours. (Laughter.) Get it? It's like, okay, golf is just golf. You're just like breakfast, play out there, and when you came home you just be at the home. You just have to release everything it out and then just do anything like without thinking about golf.

I think it's a really must for golfer to do that I would say. If you like golf 24 hours I think your brain should be like burn out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time and best of luck this week.

ATTHAYA THITIKUL: Thank you.

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