

ANA Inspiration

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club

Jin Young Ko

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, looks like we'll get started here. Thank you for being inside the virtual media center here at ANA Inspiration. I'm pleased to be joined by Jin Young Ko.

Without further ado, Jin Young, thank you for joining us today. How are you doing?

JIN YOUNG KO: I'm doing good.

Q. That's good.

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

Q. Let's take it back to 2020 when you weren't able to defend here and now we're back here all over again. Was it disappointing to you not to be able to defend your championship last year?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes. I couldn't play last year at this course because COVID, and -- but it was sad because I missed defend champion, but I'm happy to be back here in 2021, so I'm looking next four days.

Q. Were you able to watch to last year from Korea?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes, I did.

Q. Nice. So you were a fan?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes.

Q. Very different. Very different. But since rejoining the tour, especially in 2021 specifically, you've already had two Top 5 finishes. What have you been working on in your game to get to where you are?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, yeah, I had just three events this year and I finished two Top 5 and one missed the cut.

But it was -- it was -- missed the cut was like fine because my body condition was so bad so I couldn't hit well and I didn't play well in Florida.

But I finished good last week and first week in the Florida as well, so I'm looking forward this week. Well, I practiced a lot in Korea with the snows. (Laughter.) And I know how to play in wintertime.

Well, it was hard, but, yeah, I had a lot of practice in short game and putting and then swing, so I'm happy.

Q. When you say you weren't happy with your body condition were you in Florida adjusting anything in your swing or were you kind of just adjusting to the tour again?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I was tired so my swing were not good, so that's make sense. (Laughter.)

Q. Last week you said you had a really good finish. What do you think is the strongest part of your game right now?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I change the driver last week after first round. I went to the Titleist center and I tried a lot of -- couple drivers and I picked really good one, so I used that one next three days and I hit really good last week.

I had good practice last three days in Mission Hills, so I can't wait to tomorrow and next four days.

Q. Yeah. So we're back here at Mission Hills. What are the memories like when you're back here coming back as a past champion?

JIN YOUNG KO: Of course Poppy's Pond, yeah, in 2019 I jumped in it and I want to jump in again someday.

Q. What are some of the -- have you been on the course yet and what are some of the things that you like best about the course right now?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, everything. It's like fairway is really perfectly clearing and best -- greens are one of the best, putting green, and, well, even weather is too little hot, but it's good.

Q. A little hot is better than snow, isn't it?

JIN YOUNG KO: Of course. (Laughter.)



JIN YOUNG KO: Okay. Bye.

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Q. Do you feel like the defending champion since you won here the last time you played?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yes, yes, yes, but I can see that Mirim on the picture before the first tee like behind the tee, so I'm not defend, she's defend.

Q. What is it about the golf course that fits your game best?

JIN YOUNG KO: Well, I think I have to try -- well, fairway is narrow still and rough is thicker, but not as much in 2019. But greens firmer than 2019, so I have to keep the fairway a lot I think for this week.

So, well, I think I don't have to lose the focus. Yeah.

Q. So back here there is no grandstand. The last time you were here there were a bunch of fans. Is it weird for you to be back here with no fans?

JIN YOUNG KO: Of course, and especially I want to be like high five when I walk to the 18 greens before the bridge, but we couldn't, we can't do that in 2021.

So it's sad, because that part is one of the good memorable in ANA Inspiration, but we can't. It's sad. I will do just by myself. (Applause) Yay! High five.

Q. And of course we don't have the grandstand on 18. It's an island green. What are your thoughts of the way it's playing?

JIN YOUNG KO: Yeah, I played yesterday on 18. I looked at the green and I felt scared, because if I shoot -- I could hit hybrid or 5-wood. If past the hole, safe, because grandstand a back there. But this year is nothing. Just water.

So I think I will be layup every day. (Laughter.)

Q. All right. To wrap up, it is the 50th anniversary of this prestigious championship. What does it mean to you to be a part of the 50th edition of this major?

JIN YOUNG KO: Oh, this is special I think. I'm 25 years old and this tournament is going to be 50 years, it's like double. (Laughter.) Double to my age.

So, yeah, 50 is like wow. It's congratulations. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Thank you Jin Young for joining us. We appreciate the time.

