

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Michelle Wie West

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, here to kick off the 2022 LPGA Tour season with Michelle Wie West. Michelle, it's great to have you back here.

First time here at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions. What's it feel like to be getting things back underway for the season?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: You know, I'm so excited to be here. You know, I'm just kind of enjoying this week, using it as like a celebration of my win.

You know, finally being able to play in this tournament after maternity leave, I'm really excited to be here.

Q. This is off your win at the HSBC Women's World Championship in 2018. I remember that day. It was a lot hotter there than here. When is the last time you played in temps like these?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Well, living in California we definitely get temperatures like this. I expected it to be a little bit warmer coming out east again, but I know how cold Orlando can get. I lived out here. I think it's going to warmup for the week, so I'm excited for that.

Q. We're happy to have you here. What's your familiarity with Lake Nona? How often have you played it, and now what are your thoughts after seeing it these first couple days?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Not often, but I have a lot of great memories. The Leadbetters used to live here so I used to go to their house for Thanksgiving all the time growing up.

So a lot of great memories. Not a lot of memories as an adult, but I played the course a couple times and it was starting to come back to me slowly.

Q. Good. What's coming back to you? Are you remembering specific holes, specific shots? What are



you seeing out there?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, just the general layout. Oh, I remember this hole. Nothing too specific. But it's a great golf course.

I played nine yesterday and nine today, and this is -- Lake Nona is a really great golf course. You know, just it's different from any other golf course that you see in Florida. Not one hole is the same. You have really cool green layouts, tricky pins here and there.

So once the weather gets a little bit warmer it's going to be a really fun week.

Q. It will be a fun week. It's a really different week with the celebrity layers added in. I know you're good friends with Kira. Saw you posted with her. How many of these people do you know, and what do you think this week is going to be like for you?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, it's been fun to see a lot of my friends on the green, and it's very different. You know, they had sound check today on 18 green. There were already blasting music, so it's going to be a lot of fun. I'm really looking forward to it.

Q. It was right during our previous press conference. Yes, it is, it's the party on 18. Welcome to the party on 18.

Life is a little different for you now with Kenna running around. She's getting so big. What's it like now balancing mom and professional athlete and the business work that you're doing too and really branching out?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, you know, priorities have definitely shifted. Before her golf was my number one priority. I ate, slept, breathe everything golf. Now it's her. Even the reason why I'm playing is because of her.

But it's been really fun. It's been really fun to see her grow, and she has the funniest little character, so she keeps us entertained.

Q. Still tight with the dogs?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, yeah, yeah.



Q. On a personal note, I think you have one of the best girl gang groups in golf. You, Kira K. Dixon, Hally Leadbetter, Megan with Foray Golf. What's it like to have that close of a girl gang in this industry and be such close friends with a lot of amazing women?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: It's great. Like you said, I do have the best girl gang out there. It's just I just look up to them so much and they inspire me, all in very different ways.

It's amazing. Like everyone has such a different skillset in our group, so it's been really fun to get advice from people, just blast out a question in the group chat, and it's amazing what kind of answers get back.

Mostly it's just support and the nonjudgment and the true support from one another. We really want to see each other succeed, and I think that's what makes really good friends.

Q. I know you and Hally grew up together, but how did the group come together? You have a lot of people from all different parts of the country. How did you all get together?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I think Hally has been the best connector. She's definitely the connector of the group. I think we've all met each other through Hally.

So I met Megan LaMothe through Hally and then she invited us all for a girl's trip down to the Bahamas, and Kira and I never we actually met before, but we were roommates, we shared a room that week, so we got to know each other really well.

Then I met Amanda through Hally as well. So Hally has been the connector in the group.

Q. How excited are you to see Kira out here? Obviously she is a Golf Channel correspondent. You've played golf with her before, but how excited are you to watch her play this week?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I'm so excited. I had such a blast playing with her yesterday. She has really improved, been working really hard on her game. She also has such a passion for the game, too.

It's been really cool to see and hear about her story and how she's really into the game and taking it very seriously this week and very nervous, but I think she's going to do great.

Q. You mentioned earlier about your priorities. Let's talk about goal setting. How are your goals different now as a mom and businesswoman than they were before?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Very different. You know, it was very -- if I played well, if I didn't play well, that was like the end all, right? I felt like my whole mood surrounded on that.

But I see her smile or chase after her and everything just disappears. My main goal is to hopefully be a good role model for her, so that's why I'm kind of really focused on the business end, playing golf.

Yeah, I guess just want to make her proud and be a good example.

But I don't know. It's just -- I can't really explain it. It's more like an inner feeling kind of thing. But there is really no prouder moment than watching her try something over and over again and then finally succeeding. It's really cool to watch.

Q. Were you ever much of a goal setter, like beginning of the year I want to do this?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Uh-huh, yeah. You know, I don't think I ever wrote it down. I was never like the write-down-my-goals kind of person, but always made a mental checklist of what I wanted to achieve.

Yeah, I had big goals, small goals, everyday goals, that kind of stuff.

Q. What are the goals now for your game?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Goals for my game? I think specifically for this week I really want to enjoy it and have fun; go out there and try and mistake as many birdies as I can and play freely.

Yeah, make as many birdies as I can.

Q. It was really exciting when it was announced that you were going to be at this tournament. Just curious as to when you decided that you were going to play in this event.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: When was the deadline? (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Last week.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: No, I committed I think just past

New Year's. Yeah, probably -- yeah, how many weeks are we into January? It just after New Year's.

Q. And have you made any plans or decisions on how much you want to play this season?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I have not. I'm kind of looking at the schedule and just seeing what fits best with me and my family.

Q. Makes sense. And is there anything specific you've been working on in your game since your last tour event last year?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Everything. (Smiling.) Yeah, pretty much everything, I guess. I spent a long time not playing, and then kind of picked up the clubs again. So it's been a rally grind, just kind of working on everything.

Q. What have you heard from some of your friends in the field about what it's like playing in this event?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, before I committed I texted Marina, Hey, what's up with this event? Do I really want to play in it? Something I should do?

Yes, you have to play in it. It's so different. You get to play with the celebrities and athletes and it's so cool, a fun week celebrate your win.

I was like, Hey, you sold me on it. I always thought it was like that, but hearing it from a past player that played in this event really cemented that for me.

Q. Anyone you're particularly looking to play with or get to meet or get to know a little bit better?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, I'm excited. Hopefully I go to play with my friends. That would be really fun. But, yeah, I haven't really looked at the list so I don't really know who is here besides who I know is here, if that makes sense.

Yeah, just excited to meet new people, make new friends, and hear different life stories.

Q. I get all my news from dirt.com -- not really, but that's where I read on a website called dirt.com that you moved to L.A.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh.

Q. What can you tell us about your life changes?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, I guess we moved down

south, warmer weather I guess. But, yeah, it's been a big change.

Yeah, dirt.com, huh?

Q. I know. I never heard about it before, but it's a real estate thing I guess. You're in a bigger house it looks like. More room for the dogs and the fam.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah. And actually we're having a new addition. Got a new puppy, so that's exciting.

Q. What kind of dog?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Same one as Gatsby.

Q. What's the name?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Daisy.

Q. Of course. Of course. I love it. I love it. I have one more kind of fun one. Who's the best/worst celebrity you've played with in terms of skill over the years?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Best, Mardy Fish. Played with him recently. Really impressive, his golf game. He hits it so far.

Now worst, oh, I have no idea. That's a hard one.

Q. Maybe a loaded question, too.

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I don't know. I don't have an answer for you unfortunately for that.

Q. Where do you play in L.A.? Where do you practice and who do you practice with?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I kind of play around. Hillcrest let's me use their range. Trying to get a membership at El Cab. But, yeah, haven't really have too much roots. We go down to Madison Club a lot, which is really nice.

Q. How much are you able to hit balls and practice on a week to week basis?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: You know, we finally got a nanny which has been a game changer. I no longer can bring her out to the range with me because she will run around and I can't hit balls.

So I probably go out there two, two and a half hours every day, or try to.

Q. So it's more of a baby thing than a health thing in

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

terms of being able to practice?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, it's kind of both. I'm not at the stage of my body where I can go and beat balls for four hours anymore. So, yeah, definitely always taking into consideration my body and my wrist, neck.

So, yeah, just trying to be -- trying to have more quality practice than quantity. I've done that even before the baby as well, so that's not new.

Q. And then also, what do you miss the most about being out here on tour week in, week out?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I miss my friends, the people. I miss seeing all of you guys. Yeah, so it's coming to events like this. It's really fun to see everyone.

Q. Do you miss the competition too?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, yeah, I miss the competition as well.

Q. First off, I want to ask but the hoodie. Got mine on here. I know you came to Roberta with this idea, let's put an LPGA logo on a hoodie. Did it end up becoming much bigger than you ever thought it would be?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Oh, yeah. It's completely exceeded all our expectations. The amount of money that we raised for the charities, the amount of awareness that we've raised.

And it's just so cool to see random people wearing it, people that I have zero connection with, just seeing them at airport or the sporting arenas.

It's been really, really cool.

Q. And that leads me to the final question: You were so involved in this project, and it seems to me a lot of these business things and things we see popping up are ventures that you're not only participating in, but investing in and founding. That's really cool. What feeds that for you want to get involved with these companies not just on an ambassador level but on an entrepreneurial level?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, it's been really fun to be a part of companies that I truly believe in, gaining a lot of advice from other fellow athletes. It's fun to make your mark and chose which comes you believe in.

I think it really started from going to Stanford. I felt like I was really at that phase or generation that was the boom of

entrepreneurship, Snapchat, Facebook, really all that.

I always wanted to do that, go into that side. Obviously there are a lot smarter people, so I'm just pigging backing on those smarter people and just trying to help them accomplish what they can.

Q. I'm curious on how many time you spend around Rose Zhang since she's been at Stanford or before that what your thoughts of her game and the season that she's putting together?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: Yeah, I had the pleasure of actually talking to her on the phone a little bit the other day, and she's a special girl. Really, really great player, but really has her head on straight.

I think we can expect really great things for her. I was trying to convince her to stay at Stanford as long as she can. I was like, You have to experience a COVID-free Stanford year.

Hopefully, we'll see. Yeah, she's a great player. I'm excited to see what she's going to go in the future.

Q. Is there anything that reminds you of yourself when you look at her?

MICHELLE WIE WEST: I try not to make comparisons. I think everyone has their own special path, and I don't think it's fair to her to compare her to me or her to anyone else. I think she's unique. She's Rose. I think she's going to do very special things.

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