

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Friday, January 21, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Danielle Kang

Quick Quotes

Q. Here with Danielle Kang, tied for the lead now at minus 9, round of 67, an eagle, three birdies. Pretty good card. Tell us about that eagle there on the front nine.

DANIELLE KANG: I was having a little bit of a slow start. I struck the ball really well on the front nine, gave myself awesome opportunities probably 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and hit good putts and they just weren't dropping.

I wanted to hit it really close on 7. Even on 2 I probably landed around two inches from the hole and spun back to about eight feet and ended up missing the putt.

On 7 I was like, Let's just hit it as close as possible. I saw the ball tracing and I went, Just go so close I don't have to putt and then it went in, so it was super cool.

Q. Nice. About how far out were you?

DANIELLE KANG: 155 with a 7-iron.

Q. The three birdies on the back nine, 11, 13, 15, tell us about those.

DANIELLE KANG: I think I made some really good longer putts. I kind of started getting into the rhythm of the greens speed. It was slower than yesterday. It was much slower. I don't know why.

So I had to get myself to hit it a little bit firmer because yesterday was so quick. I hit a four-footer eight feet by yesterday and that kind of threw me off, so I just tried to stay in it.

Even on the last hole I couldn't get myself to hit it harder than that, because I know that if it is fast, it's going to go down the hill if I hit it normal speed.

So I'm just trying to calibrate as I play, and that's kind of difficult to do.



Q. But you did get to play with Lee Brice today.

DANIELLE KANG: I know.

Q. Made it fun?

DANIELLE KANG: We always have fun. I know he was a bit stressed out because John is a really good player and a serious player, and so am I, and Lee is a bit more relaxed and easygoing.

He didn't want to get in our way, but he never gets in my way but we never know how that works. He seemed to have fun. I just kept making fun of him. I told him I would give him 100 bucks if he hits it even on the green at one point.

He has really good humor about it. He gave me his guitar pick and I started making putts, so I kept it.

Q. New ball marker maybe.

DANIELLE KANG: Yes.

Q. You mentioned how serious John is. We've seen him as the ace pitcher for so many years. What's it like playing alongside someone like that on the golf course who is as good at one sport as another?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, it's not just about being serious. I just love watching him compete, watching other athletes being in the zone, being in their bubble and zoning into the shot they have to do.

And when they react, whether it's negative or positive, upset because they mishit a shot, that shows passion for me. It's so cool to see how much he cares and that passion he has for this game. I think it's really great that he has golf after his career.

I thought to myself today, I wondering where I'm going to put my competitive passion after, because golf is something that people pick up in later years.

So it's a little different. It's really cool to watch him hit some drives today. I think he got in the rhythm of that and it was just flying. Whoever was behind me drove the green on



No. 5.

Q. Really?

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah. I go, Well, you wanted to hit it in the middle of the green, so...

Q. There is some insane strength out there with some of these guys.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah, they're flying 250, 260 on some holes. They're just strong baseball players.

Q. But as we heard from a lot of people, they're driving it long but they're finding that rough, and you guys are better at not finding that rough.

DANIELLE KANG: I found a lot of rough today around the greens, but I had some good chip shots.

Q. You're successful at getting out of it.

DANIELLE KANG: Sometimes, yeah.

Q. What's the sense of accomplishment going around this golf course bogey-free? Did you have one or two really good saves out there?

DANIELLE KANG: I didn't realize I was bogey-free. Honestly, I said in the last two days, probably you guys are probably going to hear me repeat the same thing: I'm not really focused on the result, not trying to. I'm just trying to do the job in front of me and hit the best I can with the shot that's in front of me.

Things that I'm working on, it's just progressing, not just today, not just tomorrow, not just Sunday, but rest of the year, and working towards the goal that I'm trying to get as consistent as possible.

So today I guess I was bogey-free, but I missed so many putts on the front nine, but tried not to think about it and I dropped it as quickly as I can. I ended up holing out one, and I think maybe the gallery said to me, Maybe you'll learn how to read a putt now.

I said, Oh, okay. Normally it would bother me, but I just go, Oh, okay, and then you drop it and have the next thing to focus on.

Things are going to happen that I'm not going to like, but just going to have to keep moving forward. That's the most difficult thing that I'm working on.

Q. Golfers can be very results oriented.

DANIELLE KANG: Yeah.

Q. When you're not as much, does it lighten thing a little?

DANIELLE KANG: A little bit. I'm not going to say I don't care about the result. I definitely do. But trying not to the focus on the result during the process of what I need to do get to the result. I still need to somehow get there.

Yeah, it's hard. Golf is a hard sport or game, whatever you want to call it.

Q. Been a little surprised about how good your speed control has been. Even the putts you missed appeared as though you hit them the right speed. I'm just curious, that always seems to be the rustiest thing of the rust people have to knock off. Is that the case for you, or did you realize that...

DANIELLE KANG: I think for me the rust of the speed reflects to how you feel over it. I don't feel as confident. I know my speed is not going to be bad, but I'm not confident about it yet. That's the rust.

I normally practice speed putting most of my practices, so I've put most time into dialing in and calibrating speed on every green.

But when it kind of alters per day drastically, that's -- it takes me time to kind of adjust throughout the round. That's kind of like one of the things that's most difficult on me.

Yeah, I just practice putting, a lot speed practice.

Q. Just a couple questions from me. New year, new season. A lot of people set a lot of resolutions. Do you have any New Year's resolutions in golf and out of golf?

DANIELLE KANG: Not really. I don't have a New Year's resolution. I have like a new plan. Not new. I want to say new, I just -- I am where I am right now and I kind of wanted to get to a certain place.

Whether it's result of how I want to be, feel, where I want my physicality to be, swing speed needs to be, it takes time. It's going to take months to get there. I don't think I can necessarily say like, Oh, this is my new resolution, to hit it 260.

Q. Over the course of your career have there been any tips that have stood out to you and really helped you



through your journey on the LPGA?

DANIELLE KANG: In the moment, yes, but sometimes the tips and the advice that I've gotten doesn't carry over. Every other month or every other year you feel different. You have different struggles, different mindset.

So I'm a different player now than I was last year and year before that, so whatever worked in 2020 might not work now.

For now, I think my biggest advice would be that I have gotten that helps me is to focus on what I need to do and not give up on it because I'm fearful of it.

Just keep pushing through it and see how far I can get.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports