

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Nelly Korda

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Okay, here with Nelly Korda, current world No. 2 on the Rolex Rankings coming again to play at Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions.

We got a lot of media here today, so I'll just kick it off by asking how you're feeling and how ready you are, excited you are, to play in this tournament?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, feeling good. Didn't have too much of an off-season. Got to play QBE and PNC in December. Took like a week off. But, yeah, I'm feeling good.

Q. Testing the new equipment. When did you do it? How did you do it? How are you liking it?

NELLY KORDA: I started testing, gosh, kind of in October. I use to play TaylorMade growing up actually, so throughout my entire junior career I played TaylorMade.

They were amazing when it came to how diligent they were with the whole process of it. Obviously it was a lot of extensive testing, because to make the switch I wanted to be 100% sure. Everything honestly went really smoothly. I was hitting every club really well.

The technology is so good in every company that I just thought that TaylorMade was the best option for me going forward?

Q. What about the golf ball? Have you seen any difference? What have been the differences?

NELLY KORDA: No, the golf ball is really good. It was very similar to the old one I used to play. I'm playing the TP-5; I kind of tested the X a little, but I preferred the 5 around the greens.

I was still seeing really great control with my irons, with my driver, and I saw a little bit of distance as well.



Q. A lot of people were saying that this is kind of a warmup week for them, but you've been playing a lot. What are your expectations?

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of tough. Like you have one week and then you have four weeks off, so it's kind of hard to get into the swing of things.

For me, this week my expectations are obviously I'm going in wanting to win, trying to see the equipment, see if I need to tweak it here and there.

But this is such a fun and unique event. I always have so much fun. I'm playing with Derek Lowe again first round. I played with him three times last year. I make sure to request him every year.

Yeah, I'm just excited for tomorrow and see how it goes.

Q. When you look at last year and the forced break, when you came back did it affect how you looked at golf?

NELLY KORDA: As in the blood clot?

Q. Yeah.

NELLY KORDA: I think I was just a little bit more grateful to be playing, to be traveling, to be doing what I love.

Obviously appreciation grows when it's taken away from you in that sense, so for sure I think I've just grown to appreciate it a little bit more. Just a simple things of getting to go on the range and hit some balls, hit some putts, and traveling.

Q. Yeah. And as you look at this course and how you got to know it through a few years, what do you see as the biggest challenge here?

NELLY KORDA: I think the greens. There is a lot of fall-offs on these greens. You have to hit it really well to give yourself a good opportunity.

But they're pretty subtle. The course kind of reminds me a little bit of Concession, but I would say the course's defense is the greens. You have to hit good, quality shots into the greens and be accurate, as well as read the subtle



breaks on the greens with the bermuda.

Q. Nelly, last time we saw you in Naples I was asking questions about your signature line. A little bit of a another switch besides TaylorMade. Can you tell us about your new a apparel deal and what it means to you to be with Nike.

NELLY KORDA: Growing up, I looked up to athletes, Maria Sharapova, Nadal, Federer, they were all wearing Nike, and obviously when it was presented to me I was over the moon, because that was something as a child I kind of dreamt about.

Yeah, I'm honestly over the moon to be sponsored by Nike and to be a Nike athlete. That's something I've always dreamt about.

Q. Will you be in upcoming commercials or anything fun you can share that's coming down the pike?

NELLY KORDA: Nothing in the plans right now. We'll see. As of right now I'm just focusing on this event, and then moving forward we'll see.

Q. I'm sure you saw that temporary lockers were just delivered here a little bit ago. What does a player-only locker room mean to you, and how important is it to have that space?

NELLY KORDA: Honestly, I've played this tournament I think from the start. Not 100% sure. We have never had lockers. To me this event is so unique in the sense where that stuff doesn't really bother me. You're out here competing with different celebrities, former athletes, current athletes.

To me like this event is so special and different that something like that doesn't bother me at this event. Obviously if it would be at a regular LPGA event it would bother me. At this event I think there are so many different, unique, cool stories that, as I said, it just -- I didn't even think twice about it.

As long as I have a gym to warmup in, a range, I'm very happy.

Q. Do you think that much about player-only spaces where you feel secure?

NELLY KORDA: Not this week.

Q. In general?

NELLY KORDA: Just in general it's such a unique event.

You're playing with men, you're playing women. To me, it just doesn't bother me.

If was a regular LPGA event for sure I would want my own space, my locker, I would want to put stuff in it.

But this event is just unique itself.

Q. Just wondering how different the off-season was for you, because you played in the team event in Naples, you played in the PNC, you made an equipment change. I am sure there is a lot of testing. Doesn't feel like you had a whole lot of time off. What's that been like?

NELLY KORDA: No, honestly, I put my clubs away for a week. I didn't see the gym for a week. I have been training in the gym a lot actually. I took the time kind of a little bit this off-season to focus on the gym to strengthen just for the year, to build a base in a sense to learn more about my body.

So in that sense, yeah, I really have not had much of an off-season. I've been playing a lot, QBE, PNC, which are opportunities I'm so grateful for. I would never turn those down, especially being able showcase women's golf. If I'm a slight bit part of that I'm super happy and super grateful to even be on that stage.

Yeah, it was definitely a different off-season, but I have four weeks off after this event. It's going to be again like a mini off-season, which to me doesn't really bother me.

Q. You mentioned how much you have played with Derek Lowe. Any favorite memories or stories you can share with us?

NELLY KORDA: I have too many.

Q. Give us one.

NELLY KORDA: I don't know if they're appropriate. No, honestly, he is the kindest guy. Him and his wife, Carolyn, they come out and watch me every event in Naples. At our Tour Championship, too.

So over the years I've got to know him really well and I've enjoyed every second I've spent with him. Seeing him lift the trophy on Sunday last year was the most exciting thing I've seen.

Q. Kind of going off that question of what you were limited to in the short off-season and preparing your body for what's to come in 2023, the cadence of this schedule with this event and then as you mentioned

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

four weeks off, back-to-back majors, a lot of travel this season in particular, and this is on the heels of all the changes that happened due to COVID manipulating things, what do you make of this year's schedule?

NELLY KORDA: There is a lot of thought that went into this year's schedule. That's why I kind of sat down and my team and I decided that it was really important to focus on my body, being able to be fresh.

Every year I run into a situation where I'm kind of burnt out, and I'm really hoping that I've learned from that. Last year I did it as well. I spent seven weeks on the road, close to eight actually. I wasn't playing all eight, but just not being at home and being able to unpack my suitcase and put new clothes in there, that to me is like --

Q. A reset?

NELLY KORDA: It's not a reset to me. Going home is a reset. So making sure that I'm being able to reset is going to be super important. Obviously the schedule is kind of tough. I don't tend to like to play four events in a row, but I think I'm going to have to this year.

Obviously it's a Solheim Cup year; two majors on completely different coasts of the U.S. It's going to be tough for sure. I think a lot of girls are probably going to focus on being fresh for the entire season, because at the end of the day, when you're traveling so much, it burns you out.

Q. And final question from me: Recently you and I were talking about the evolution of your putting grip and style. With the new clubs you have in your bag, can you explain some of the subtleties that you've changed over time?

NELLY KORDA: I'm still sticking to the left-hand low. Only thing I dabbled with is the index finger down the shaft. I feel like it's definitely a little bit more stable going through the ball.

Still using the same putter.

Q. Changes from when you first got out on tour.

NELLY KORDA: Oh. Yeah, I went through conventional, and I just think for me personally, I'm a little bit more accurate with the left-hand low.

THE MODERATOR: I have one for you. Nelly, this is the first event on tour since the passing the Kathy Whitworth. I just wanted to know your thoughts on her passing and her legacy.

NELLY KORDA: So I played in the Kathy Whitworth Invitational as a junior. I loved Kathy. I definitely held her really close to my heart. Every single time I saw here, I mean, we exchanged emails back and forth a couple times. I was super sad to hear of her passing.

She left an incredible legacy behind. Hopefully it continues to grow and girls that enter the game of golf continue to learn about her. But, yeah, it was definitely tough to see.

Q. Had a lot of high praise for your swing in those late season events you played.

NELLY KORDA: Yeah.

Q. What do you pull from that experience?

NELLY KORDA: That they should watch more women's golf. (Laughter.) Honestly, no, it was such an incredible experience. They were very kind with their words towards me, but I think if they came out here and watched all the girls compete they would be equally impressed.

Just shows the product that we have out here, and hopefully we continue to grow that.

Q. Is there anything specifically that you can learn about your game watching some of those...

NELLY KORDA: Yeah, for sure. There were some shots that there were pins that I would never even think twice about kind of being aggressive at. They hit those high fades at them.

Obviously they're hitting shorter clubs. I'm saying like par-3s. They're hitting shorter clubs in, but it was incredible to see the compression that they get even and the kind of shots that they pick; course management and how I would never -- I would take a putt 20 feet left and be safe and they're going straight at it hitting a high fade and hitting it to five feet and giving themselves a really good birdie opportunity. That's kind of mainly what I saw.

THE MODERATOR: All right, that's all. Thank you so much, Nelly, for your time.

NELLY KORDA: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports